

Student Booklet- with Blanks

THE PLUMB LINE- Class Outline

PART I BASIC: Accepting our Responsibility as Disciples

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2. **The Master Builder:** *"Who is God? Who are we?"*
3. **The Master's Plan:** *"God's Basic Plan of Salvation"*
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PART I ADVANCE:

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PART II BASIC: Assisting in Spreading & Living out our Responsibility as Disciples

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"Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!"

PART I BASIC:

Accepting our Responsibility as Disciples

1. **PART I BASIC-** Introduction: The Plumb Line. (1st Level): The Purpose of our Class. (A 12-level experience to help us meet the Standard of God- The Plumb Line.)

THE PLUMB LINE Class led by Pastor Troy:

The Plumb Line is a very special 12-week discipleship class designed by Pastor Troy aimed at building our Community of Faith toward its vision of growing faithful followers of Christ through Prayer, Outreach, Evangelism, Worship and Discipleship. In conversation with the elders, pastors & ministry staff, I have developed this special course which has been written just for our church family. We believe THE PLUMB LINE is a class that every single person in our church can grow from! We believe God will use it in PREPARING our church for a whole new level of ministry as a Community of Faith. Discipleship does not happen accidentally but in an atmosphere where our spirit is challenged vertically according to God's Word both in a planned and intentional way. Our class is a 12-level experience at unlocking the standards God has for us and how we can measure up to the vertical challenge God has for us in growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ! .

a. A Plumb Line- Explain

i. WORLD DEFINITION OF THE PLUMB LINE:

You may be asking “**Just what is a Plumb line?**” _____

It has been used since very ancient times. A plumb line consists merely of a line and a weight of some sort, at first just a stone, but later a weight made from lead. Plumb lines were known to many people throughout Biblical History, including Jesus Christ who would have owned a set of various weights of them for His use in the building trade.

The weight is called the **plumb bob**. When suspended next to a workpiece it defines a vertical line- The “Plumb”. The word comes from the Latin **plumbum**, or “lead,” which is the material that replaced the original stone versions used to weight the bob or plummet.

The Plumb Line dates at least back to ancient Egypt. It was used by bricklayers, masons, and carpenters to make sure construction was done in a plumb or perfectly upright fashion.

Plumb bobs are also used in surveying and are used to set instruments exactly over a fixed datum marker. Up until our modern age great buildings were built using vertical datum lines or marks in the floor to keep the buildings plumb as they built upward.

Today you can still find brass datum marks inlaid on the floor of many great buildings signifying points builders used to keep great buildings, towers, domes, etc.... plumb as they were built.

ii. **BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF THE PLUMB LINE:**

The Hebrew word **misgelet** is translated “Plummet” in the King James or in most modern language Bibles as the “Plumb Line”. We find this word used in 2 Kings 21:13, Isaiah 28:17, Amos 7:7-8 & Zachariah 4:10.

In our text, the “Plumb Line” is always

_____ . As Isaiah says in 28:17 *“I will make justice the measuring line and **righteousness the plumb line.**”* (niv)

iii. **CONNECTING IT TO THE WORD OF GOD AND GOD’S PLAN FOR US:**

1. 2 Kings 21:13,

2 Kings 21:1-13 ncv

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he was king fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. ²He did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the hateful things the other nations had done— the nations that the LORD had forced out of the land ahead of the Israelites. ³Manasseh’s father, Hezekiah, had destroyed the places where gods were worshiped, but Manasseh rebuilt them. He built altars for Baal, and he made an Asherah idol as Ahab king of Israel had done. Manasseh also worshiped all the stars of the sky and served them. ⁴The LORD had said about the Temple, “I will be worshiped in Jerusalem,” but Manasseh built altars in the Temple of the LORD. ⁵He built altars to worship the stars in the two courtyards of the Temple of the LORD. ⁶He made his own son pass through fire. He practiced magic and told the future by explaining signs and dreams, and he got advice from mediums and fortune-tellers. He did many things the LORD said were wrong, which made the LORD angry. ⁷Manasseh carved an Asherah idol and put it in the Temple. The LORD had said to David and his son Solomon about the Temple, “I will be worshiped forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel. ⁸I will never again make the Israelites wander out of the land I gave their ancestors. But they must obey everything I have commanded them and all the teachings my servant Moses gave them.” ⁹But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them to do more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed ahead of the Israelites. ¹⁰The LORD said through his servants the prophets, ¹¹“Manasseh king of Judah has done these hateful things. He has done more evil than the Amorites before him. He also has led Judah to sin with his idols. ¹²So this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I will bring so much trouble on Jerusalem and Judah that anyone who hears about it will be shocked. ¹³ I will stretch the measuring line of Samaria over Jerusalem, and **the plumb line used against Ahab’s family will be used on Jerusalem.** I will wipe out Jerusalem as a person wipes a dish and turns it upside down.

2. Isaiah 28:17,

Isaiah 28:16-17 nlt

Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem. It is firm, a tested and precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never run away again.

¹⁷ "I will take the measuring line of justice and **the plumb line of righteousness** to check the foundation wall you have built. Your refuge looks strong, but since it is made of lies, a hailstorm will knock it down. Since it is made of deception, the enemy will come like a flood to sweep it away.

3. Amos 7:7-9

Amos 7:7-9 nlt *A Vision of a Plumb Line*

⁷ Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a **plumb line**. He was checking it with **a plumb line to see if it was straight**.⁸ And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I answered, "**A plumb line.**"

And the Lord replied, "**I will test my people with this plumb line**. I will no longer ignore all their sins.⁹ The pagan shrines of your ancestors and the temples of Israel will be destroyed, and I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam (*King of Israel*) to a sudden end." [()-my emphasis added]

4. Zech 4:10.

Zechariah 4:8-10 nlt

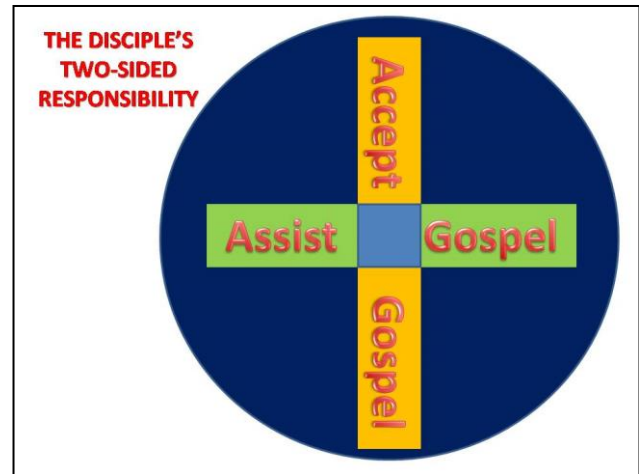
Then another message came to me from the LORD:⁹ "Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.¹⁰ Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin, **to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand**. For these seven lamps represent the eyes of the LORD that search all around the world."

b. The Measuring Tool of a DISCIPLE- Define Disciple!

The Plumb Line is God's Standard for our Righteousness or Holiness- which means our walk according to the Lord's Holy Way for His People! As I said earlier: I have designed the PLUMB LINE CLASS to cover what every Biblically Functioning Faithful Follower of Jesus Christ needs to know to be an effective Disciple.

But this means we must also define **DISCIPLE!** It is a noun which means: **one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another, in this case, the doctrines of Jesus Christ. A disciple is someone who is "a convinced adherent of a school or individual."**

It is important to note the two-sided responsibility of a disciple. They _____ the doctrine **AND** they _____ the doctrine. As a modern church we are failing horribly at the latter half of this two-sided responsibility, and we are very marginal in meeting the “Plumb” of the former. Remember in a VERTICLE STRUCTURE there are two axis’s the E-W and N-S. We as disciples must have both Axis’s aligned to be “Plumb.”



In our faith, it was the Disciples whom Jesus first called who became students of his ministry. At first the Twelve Apostles and then the numbers expanded to the 70 and to many more as the faith spread. In the Book of Acts many followers begin to call themselves disciples, and eventually take the name “Christians”, first at Antioch. (Acts 11:26)

Acts 11:25-26 nlt

²⁵Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to find Saul. ²⁶When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching great numbers of people. (It was there at Antioch that the believers (*Grk- mathētēs, math-ay-tes’ or disciples*) were first called Christians.)

Nelsons Bible Commentary Tells us:

“The believers were **called Christians** because they worshiped Christ, the Messiah. The historian Josephus called them “that tribe of Christians.” Tacitus, the Roman historian, referred to them as “Christians, a name derived from Christ.” Originally, the church called themselves “The Way.” But later they began to refer to themselves as Christians, despite the fact that the name most likely was originally used to ridicule the believers.¹”

The word _____ today is used as a way of self-identification for those who seek to learn from the life of Jesus and follow in His footsteps. The teachings of Jesus and the history of the early church records in the four gospels and the Book of Acts the use of the word “Disciple” some 232 times!

One could easily conclude that Volume 1: The Gospels and Volume 2: The Book of Acts— **is the discipleship training manual for the followers of Jesus!**

¹Radmacher, E. D. 1997. *The Nelson study Bible : New King James Version*. Includes index. (Ac 11:26). T. Nelson Publishers: Nashville

C. Putting the Plumb Line up against the “Foundation of our Faith” as Disciples.

- i. That foundation is _____.

Ephesians 2:19-22 nlt

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. ²⁰ We are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. **And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.** ²¹ We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²² Through him you Gentiles are also joined together as part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:10-13 nlt

Because of God’s special favor to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. ¹¹ **For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.** ¹² Now anyone who builds on that foundation may use gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. ¹³ But there is going to come a time of testing at the judgment day to see what kind of work each builder has done. Everyone’s work will be put through the fire to see whether or not it keeps its value.

- ii. **For our Lives to be built on the Rock they must be built upon Christ Jesus.** There are numerous references to the LORD as the Rock! (*2 Sam. 22:32, 47; 23:3; Psa. 18:2; 31:2; 40:2; Isa. 17:10; 32:2; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:4.*)

2 Samuel 22:32 nlt

For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God **is a solid Rock?**

2 Samuel 22:47 nlt

“The LORD lives! Blessed be **my Rock!**
May God, **the rock of my salvation,** be exalted!

2 Samuel 23:3 nlt

The God of Israel spoke.
The **Rock of Israel** said to me:
‘The person who rules righteously,
who rules in the fear of God,

Psalms 18:2 nlt

The LORD is **my rock** and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Matthew 16:18 nkjv

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this Rock** I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 nlt

I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. God guided all of them by sending a cloud that moved along ahead of them, and he brought them all safely through the waters of the sea on dry ground. ²As followers of Moses, they were all baptized in the cloud and the sea. ³And all of them ate the same miraculous food, ⁴and all of them drank the same miraculous water. **For they all drank from the miraculous rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.** ⁵Yet after all this, God was not pleased with most of them, and he destroyed them in the wilderness.

- iii. God wants us to “ _____ ” our lives with God's Plan for our lives.

Matthew 7:24-27 nlt Parable of the Two Builders

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse, because **it is built on rock.** ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will fall with a mighty crash.”

Acts 3:19 nkjv

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

d. Small Group Break Out Discussion: (Break into groups of 6-8)

- i. In the 2 Kings 21:1-13 text what actions or behaviors cause the King of Judah, Manasseh, to fall out of Plumb with God's standard for His People? **(Notes.)**
- ii. Amos 7:8 says, “*And the LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?” I answered, “A plumb line.” And the Lord replied, “I will test my people with this plumb line. I will no longer ignore all their sins.”* How are we doing in the world today and what represents that Plumb Line for us today as Disciples of Jesus? **(Notes.)**
- iii. Where does your life lie right now in respect to the Plumb Line of God? **(Notes.)** If your life is out of “Plumb”, what are 1 or 2 things you could do to make the most significance in righting your life toward better measuring up to the standard of God? **(Notes.)**

e. Group Share on small group learning from the 5 questions. (Notes.)

f. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK: The Master Builder: “Who is God? Who are we?”

2. PART I **BASIC**- The Master Builder: “Who is God? Who are we?”

(REVIEW)

Let’s take a look at just a few text that introduce The Plumb Line itself- The Master Builder- (*Other text you might browse: Romans 1:20 & Proverbs 8:22-30*)

- **Genesis 1- The Old Testament Declares God is the Master Builder!**

Genesis 1:1-3 & 26 nlt

In the beginning **God created the heavens and the earth.** ² The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface.** ³ Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light... ²⁶Then **God said, “Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves.** They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals.”

- **John 1- The New Testament Declares God is the Master Builder!**

John 1:1-3 & 14 nlt

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and He was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ **He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn’t make...** ¹⁴**So the Word became human** and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

- **Jeremiah 10- The Prophets remind us that God is not only the Master Builder but also the Father of Israel.**

Jeremiah 10:16 & 51:19 nlt

But the God of Israel is no idol!

He is the Creator of everything that exists, including Israel, his own special possession.

The LORD Almighty is his name!

a. Who is God?

- Who does God say God is? “_____.”**

Exodus 3:13-14 nlt

But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they won’t believe me. They will ask, ‘Which god are you talking about? What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

¹⁴ God replied, “**I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS.** Just tell them, ‘**I AM has sent me to you.**’ ”

Exodus 3:13-14 nkjv

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What *is* His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.**” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘**I AM has sent me to you.**’ ”

ii. **Nelson’s OPEN BIBLE (NASB pg.904)**

GOD

The Bible reveals God as the only INFINITE and ETERNAL BEING, having no beginning and no ending. He is CREATOR and SUSTAINER of all things. He is the SUPREME PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE, and RIGHTEOUS RULER OF HIS UNIVERSE.

He is LIFE and therefore, the ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE.... In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through His prophets. In the New Testament He reveals Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

iii. **John Wesley wrote a great statement on who God is in the Holy Trinity in his Article 1 for the Articles of Religion for the people called Methodist:**

Article 1- Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”
(Article 1 from John Wesley’s articles of religion for the people called Methodist)

b. The Bible indicates 3 Characteristics that are central to the “WHO” of God:

i. **God is _____.** **God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. (1 John 4:16b)**

1 John 4:11-17 nlt

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love has been brought to full expression through us.

¹³ And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ All who proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in him.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we are like Christ here in this world.

- ii. God is _____. (note: The three-fold “Holy, Holy, Holy” indicating the Trinitarian aspects of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.) **In a great chorus they sang: “Holy, Holy Holy is the LORD Almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory. (Isaiah 6:3)**

Isaiah 6:1-3 nlt

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Hovering around him were mighty seraphim, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with the remaining two they flew. ³ **In a great chorus they sang:**

**“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty!
The whole earth is filled with his glory!”**

- iii. God is _____. (**Psalm 9:16a & Isaiah 28:17**)

Psalm 9:16a nlt

The LORD is known for his justice.

Isaiah 28:17 nlt

¹⁷ “I will take **the measuring line of justice** and **the plumb line of righteousness** to check the foundation wall you have built...

C. We have seen God in His Son Christ Jesus:

Hebrews 1:1-3 nlt

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² But now in these final days, He has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. ³ The Son reflects God’s own glory, and everything about Him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of His command. After He died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.

d. GOD & US. "Who is God & Who are We?"

God is the _____ & We are the _____:

Jeremiah 18:1-5 nlt

The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, ² "Go down to the shop where clay pots and jars are made. I will speak to you while you are there." ³ So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel. ⁴ But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so the potter squashed the jar into a lump of clay and started again.

⁵ Then the LORD gave me this message: ⁶ "O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? **As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand.**

Isaiah 45:9-12 nlt

"Destruction is certain for those who argue with their Creator. **Does a clay pot ever argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, 'Stop, you are doing it wrong!'** Does the pot exclaim, 'How clumsy can you be!' ¹⁰ How terrible it would be if a newborn baby said to its father and mother, 'Why was I born? Why did you make me this way?' "

¹¹ This is what the LORD, the Creator and Holy One of Israel, says: "Do you question what I do? Do you give me orders about the work of my hands? ¹² I am the one who made the earth and created people to live on it. With my hands I stretched out the heavens. All the millions of stars are at my command.

Isaiah 64:8 nkjv

But now, O LORD,

You *are* our Father;

We *are* the clay, and **You our Potter;**

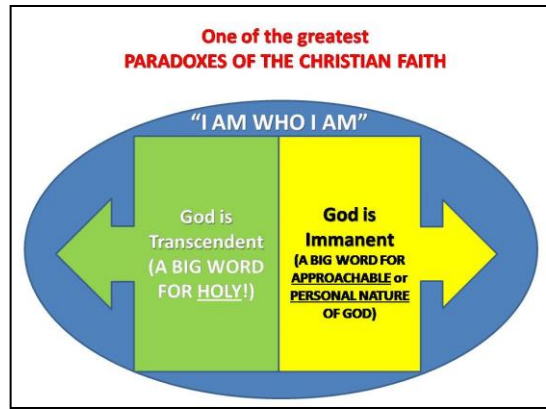
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.

Romans 9:21-24 nlt

²¹ **When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?** ²² God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction. ²³ He also has the right to pour out the riches of his glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of his mercy—²⁴ even upon us, whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

e. One of the greatest **PARADOXES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH** is found in the _____ side and _____ side of God.

(SEE SPECIAL GRAPHIC)



i. God is Transcendent. (A BIG WORD FOR _____!) *“Transcendence is the abstract, infinite, impersonal,*

and somewhat unknowable Holy nature of God, especially as God is the object of theoretical reflection.” It means:

1. God’s _____ seems to contradict God’s _____ loving nature.
2. God is more than we can fully _____ or _____!
3. God is _____, _____, _____, _____.
4. God is _____ & _____ - Always was and _____.
5. God’s _____, _____ & _____ are _____ in any way as God is _____ (Everywhere), _____ (All knowing/seeing), _____ (All Powerful).

ii. God is Immanent. (A BIG WORD FOR _____ or _____ OF GOD) *“The immanent qualities of God have to do with God’s action, God’s availability to us and God’s intervention in the events of the world.”* (pg. 11)

1. God is totally _____ and _____ - God has a gracious, unmerited, and undeserved love for us!
2. God is _____, _____, _____ & _____.
3. God is _____ & _____, but God despises _____.
4. God is constantly _____ us to _____ God’s love but God _____ when we turn away.
5. God hears _____ & _____ in human affairs.
6. God desires a relationship with us as our _____ and even our _____!

f. Five aspects that can help us get a better look at the MASTER BUILDER:

1. The _____ OF GOD. (John 1:1-3 & 14)

John 1:1-3 & 14 nlt

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make... ¹⁴**So the Word became human** and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

2. The _____ OF GOD. (Romans 9:14-24)

Romans 9:14-24 nlt

What can we say? Was God being unfair? Of course not! ¹⁵ For God said to Moses, **"I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose."***

¹⁶ So receiving God's promise is not up to us. We can't get it by choosing it or working hard for it. God will show mercy to anyone he chooses.

¹⁷ For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you, and so that my fame might spread throughout the earth."^{*} ¹⁸ So you see, God shows mercy to some just because he wants to, and he chooses to make some people refuse to listen.

¹⁹ Well then, you might say, "Why does God blame people for not listening? Haven't they simply done what he made them do?"

²⁰ No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to criticize God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? ²² God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction. ²³ He also has the right to pour out the riches of his glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of his mercy—²⁴ even upon us, whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

3. The _____ OF GOD as Holy & Pure. (Lev. 19:1-2, Prov. 30:5, Matthew 5:8)

Leviticus 19:1-2 nlt

The LORD also said to Moses, ² "Say this to the entire community of Israel: You must be holy because **I, the LORD your God, am holy.**

Proverbs 30:5 nkjv

Every word of **God is pure;** He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Matthew 5:8 nkjv

Blessed *are* the **pure in heart, For they shall see God.**

4. The _____ or Special Favor OF GOD (*Ephesians 2:4-10*)

Ephesians 2:4-10 nlt

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, ⁵ that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. **(It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!)** ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with Christ Jesus. ⁷ And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus.

⁸**God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.** ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are **God's masterpiece.** He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

5. The _____ OF GOD. (*Genesis 1:1-3 & 26, Matt 3:16-17 & John 15:26-27*)

Genesis 1:1-3 & 26 nlt

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light... ²⁶Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

Matthew 3:16-17 nlt

After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him."

John 15:26-27 nlt

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

g. In our BIBLE God's existence is _____ without _____ or _____!

"There is no attempt to prove God's existence in Scripture. Instead, the authors of both the Old and New Testaments simply assume the existence of God and focus on reporting the just, loving, and forgiving nature of God." (pg.8 An Adventure in UM Confirmation & Membership)

“The task of Christian witness today is not to prove God’s existence but to affirm a God who loves and forgives each and every human being.” (pg. 8)

Many PROOFS of God’s existence have been argued:

- i. “The _____ Argument.”- they point to evidence of design and the orderliness in nature as proof of an intelligent designer- God.
- ii. “The _____ Argument” - says the motion or process in nature had to be caused by something else and that else is- God.
- iii. “The _____ Argument”- A Very existential argument started by St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) he said that “only a fool would deny the existence of God because even a fool can conceive of ‘that than which is nothing greater can be conceived.’ Therefore, God exists, because if God did not exist, God would not be that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Conversely, if God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived, God cannot not exist.” (pg. 8)
- iv. “The _____ Argument” The final test always comes down to your personal _____ experience. *As Malachi 3:10 ncv says “...’Test me in this,’ says the LORD All Powerful...”*

h. When it comes down to it there is only one option. _____
_____ and our Existence is undoubtedly purpose driven!

The *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren begins with this assumption of Paul’s letter to the Colossians and these core thoughts:

Colossians 1:16 Msg

“For everything, absolutely everything above and below, visible and invisible...everything got started in HIM and finds its purpose in HIM,”

- Bertrand Russell, atheist said “*Unless you assume a GOD, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.*” (pg. 17 Purpose Driven Life.)
- “*God is not just the starting point of your life; HE is the SOURCE of it.*” (pg.20 PDL)
- “*Without God life makes no sense.*”- Quote from Andrei Bitov, a Russian Novelist. (pg. 21 PDL)

i. Small Group Break Out Discussion: (*Break into groups of 6-8*)

- i. What words do you see over and over again in the Scriptures we have looked at in this lesson describing God? *(Notes.)*
- ii. As a group use 10 words or less to create your definition for GOD. *(Notes.)*
- iii. If God is the Potter and YOU are the Clay, then what kind of vessel do you believe God created you to be? *(Notes.)*
- iv. What description, word or phrase about God most resonates with you personally when you first believed in God? *(Notes.)*
- v. And what description, word or phrase about God do you most resonate with today? *(Notes.)*

j. Group Share on small group learning from the 5 questions. *(Notes.)*

k. "HE IS" The Name of God- Video Clip from Sermon Spice!

l. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK

The Master's Plan: "*God's Basic Plan of Salvation*"

3. PART I **BASIC**- The Master's Plan: "God's Basic Plan of Salvation!"

(REVIEW)

a. God's Purpose, Plan & Destiny for Your Life:

- i. **What does the oldest book of the Bible say about God's Purpose & Plan for your life?**

Job 23:11-14 nlt

"For I have stayed in God's paths; I have followed His ways and not turned aside. ¹²I have not departed from His commands but have treasured His word in my heart. ¹³Nevertheless, His mind concerning me remains unchanged, and **who can turn him from His purposes?** Whatever he wants to do, he does. ¹⁴**So he will do for me all he has planned. He controls my destiny.**

- ii. **What does one of the humblest of all the prophets of God have to say about God's Purpose & Plan for your life?**

Jeremiah 10:23-24 nlt

I know, LORD, that a person's life is not His own. No one is able to plan His own course. ²⁴So correct me, LORD, but please be gentle. Do not correct me in anger, for I would die.

- iii. **What does the Best Song writer in the Bible, the one who was a man after God's own heart; have to say about God's Purpose & Plan for your life?**

Psalms 138:8 nlt

The LORD will work out his plans for my life—
for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever.
Don't abandon me, for you made me.

iv. **What does one of the greatest turn-around stories in history have to say about God’s Purpose & Plan for your life?**

2 Timothy 1:8-9 nkjv

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the Gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ **who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,**

2 Timothy 1:9 nlt

It is God who saved us and chose us to live **a holy life**. He did this not because we deserved it, **but because that was his plan long before the world began**—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus.

b. God’s Basic Plan of Salvation.

- i. _____: Created by author & teacher, Judson Poling and written about in Contagious Christianity. (See Leader’s Guide, Session 5 pg. 213)

**“God loves us, we BLEW it,
Christ paid for it, we must RECEIVE HIM.”**

- ii. _____: Dr. Bill Bright- Campus Crusade for Christ/NGL Training!

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God.

Law 1

God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

God's Love- John 3:16 nlt

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

God's Plan- John 10:10 rsv

[Christ speaking] "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" *[that it might be full and meaningful]*.

Law 2

All of us sin and our sin has **separated us** from God.

We Are Sinful- Romans 3:23 nkjv

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

We were created to have fellowship with God; but, because of our stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

We Are Separated- Romans 6:23 nkjv

"The wages of sin is death" *[spiritual separation from God]*.

This diagram illustrates that God is holy and people are sinful. A great gulf separates us. The arrows illustrate that we are continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through our own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion -- but we inevitably fail.



Law 3

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin. Through Him we can know and experience God's love and plan for our life.

He Died in Our Place- Romans 5:8 nkjv

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He Rose from the Dead- 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 nkjv

"Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..."

He Is the Only Way to God- John 14:6 nkjv

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf which separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.



Law 4

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

We Must Receive Christ- John 1:12 nkjv

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

We Receive Christ Through Faith- Ephesians 2:8-9 nkjv

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth- John 3:1-8 nkjv

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." ³**Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation- Revelations 3:20 nkjv

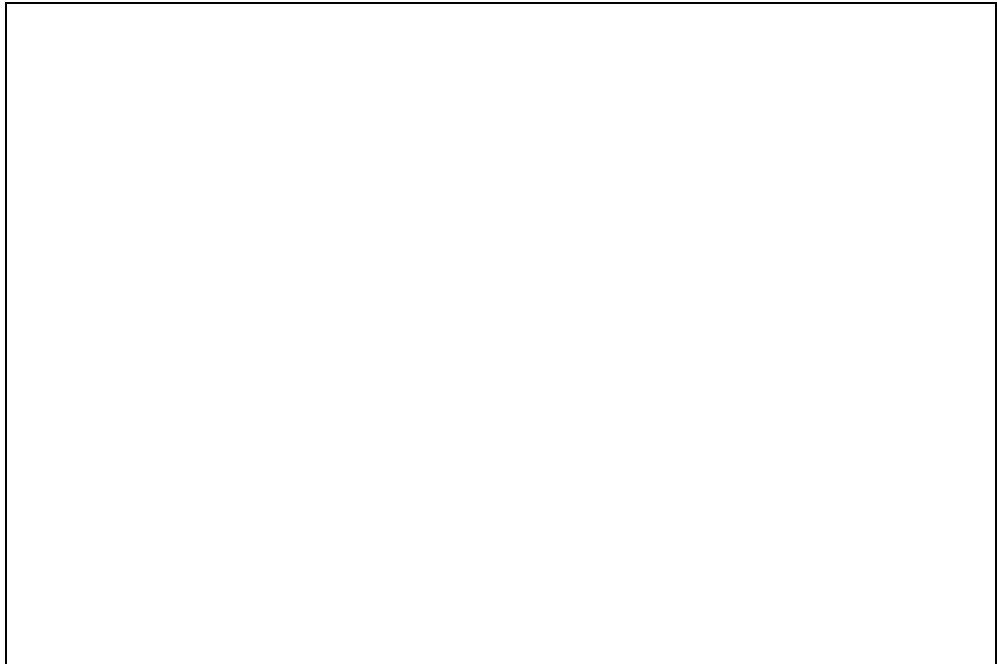
[Christ speaking] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him."

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for your sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. You receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

And it begins with one simple action which brings an incredible transformation- Acts 3:19 nkjv

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

iii. _____ : A Pathway you can walk to have a Relationship with God.



Stone 1: *We must acknowledge God as the Creator of everything and accept our humble position in God's creation.*

Romans 1:20-21 nkjv

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

STONE 2: *We must all realize that we are sinners and that we need forgiveness. We are not worthy of God's grace.*

Romans 3:23 nkjv

"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."

STONE 3: *Through Jesus, God gave us a way to be saved from our sins. God showed us His love by giving us the potential for life through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.*

Romans 5:8 nkjv

"But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

STONE 4: *If we remain sinners, we will die. However, if we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and repent of our sins, we will have eternal life.*

Romans 6:23 nkjv

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

STONE 5: *Just confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and you will be saved!*

Romans 10:9-10 nkjv

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

STONE 6: *There are no religious formulas or rituals --
Call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved!*

Romans 10:13 nkjv

"For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

STONE 7: *Determine in your heart to make Jesus
Christ the Lord of your life today.*

Romans 11:36 nkjv

"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

iv. _____: These two circles represent two kinds of lives:

- Which circle best describes your life?
- Which circle would you like to have to represent your life?



Self-Directed Life

Self is on the throne, directing decisions and actions (represented by the dots), often resulting in frustration. Jesus is outside the life.



Christ-Directed Life

Jesus is in the life and on the throne. Self is yielding to Jesus. The person sees Jesus' influence and direction in their life.

Self-Directed Life

S-Self is on the throne

T-Christ is outside the life

●-Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

Christ-Directed Life

T-Christ is in the life and on the throne

S-Self is yielding to Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

●-Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

C. Becoming a Part of the Plan:

i. The Five-Second Gospel: The 10 Second Prayer of Salvation!

“Dear Lord thank you that you love ME, I BLEW it. I am sorry! I thank you that your son Jesus Christ has paid for MY SIN, and I RECEIVE HIS GIFT AND HIM AS MY SAVIOR!”

- ii. The Four Spiritual Laws:** You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. Prayer is talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. *The following is a suggested prayer:*

“Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

- iii. The Roman Road: Are You Ready to Accept God’s Gift of Salvation?** *The following is a suggested prayer:*

“Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

- iv. **The Two-Circles of Life:** Which circle would you like to represent your life? *The following is a suggested prayer:*

Father, Forgive me for placing myself before you. I repent of my sins, I invite your Son Jesus to be the Lord of My life, and I put my whole trust in you. I place my life in your hands. I pray you will guide and direct me as I seek to serve you through the gift of your Holy Spirit. You are my God and my King and I will ever praise and serve you. Amen!

- d. **Immediate Follow-up to God's Plan-** How to water it and see your faith begin to increase and ultimately yield fruit in due season:

Acts 2:38 nkjv

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

After you make the decision to receive Jesus, you become a part of God's family. But being a part of the family means we grow from infancy to adolescence to adulthood. This comes as we grow closer and stronger in our walk and relationship with God. Here are some key things the Bible tells us to follow up on:

- Get _____ as commanded by Christ. (*Acts 2:38*)
- _____ else about your new faith in Christ. (*Romans 10:9-10*)
- _____ with God each day. It does not have to be a long period of time. Just develop the daily habit of praying to Him and _____. Ask God to increase your faith and your understanding of the Bible. (*Psalms 63:1 & 2 Timothy 2:15*)
- _____ with other followers of Jesus. Develop a group of believing friends to answer your questions and support you. (*Galatians 6:2, Hebrews 10:24-25*)
- Find a local church where you can worship God. (*Acts 14:26-28*)

e. Begin Sharing Your Testimony: You are saved according to Scripture by the “_____” & by the “_____.”

Revelations 12:11 nkjv

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

1 Peter 3:15 nlt

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

ncv

But respect Christ as the Holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have, ¹⁶but answer in a gentle way and with respect.

How do you organize that TESTIMONY or ANSWER? I believe it works best when you like Jesus told Nicodemus know “_____, _____ & _____ you were born again.”

1. When? *(personal notes)*

2. Where? *(personal notes)*

3. Why? *(personal notes)*

f. Small Group Break Out

i. Which Plan of Salvation that we looked at in this session most Resonated with you?

(Notes.)

ii. If you had 10 seconds to tell someone about God's Plan of Salvation for their life, what would your group's 10 Second Spot be? *(Notes.)*

iii. Have you personally accepted God's Plan of Salvation for you? *(I know this is a risk but remember "by the Word of Their Testimony.")* *(Notes.)*

iv. **When, Where & Why?** *(Pick one, two or three to share as a testimony to your group?)* *(Notes.)*

g. Group Share on small group learning from the 5 questions.
(Notes.)

h. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK

The Support Beams: "Basic Doctrine"

4. PART I **BASIC**- The Support Beams: “*Basic Doctrine*”

(REVIEW)

a. The Five Cookie Test.

b. Small Group Breakout:

i. How do you understand the concept of “The Doctrine of the Church”?

ii. As a Small Group come up with a definition of the word “Doctrine.”

iii. Can you list ONE- (If you know several, list your favorite)?

iv. Now put your church designer hats on and if you had to build your own “_____ Church” from scratch- what would be the key (4-10) doctrines that would define your community of faith. (*List the key 4-10 doctrines and give a simple sentence definition or description of each of those doctrines on the Small Group Leader Hand-out.*)

C. Group Share on small group learning from the 4 questions. (*See HAND-OUT EXTRA SESSION 5- THE SUPPORT BEAMS for group reporting.*)

d. The Cliff Notes to understanding The Support Beams of the Church is found in _____ - The Creed of Foundational Christian Doctrine!

i. The ABC's:

1. What does the word _____ imply?

_____ : (n) "the basis or lowest part of a structure; groundwork; the principles or origin of anything; the first stitches in knitting or crocheting.

2. What does the word _____ mean?

_____ : (n) "that which is taught; the principles, belief or dogma of any church, sect, or party.

_____ : (n) "an established principle, tenet, or doctrine; a doctrine stated in a formal manner and received by the Church as authoritative.

ii. Background on _____.

1. I think the best summary of "Foundational Christian Doctrine" is found in The Apostles' Creed.

2. History & Origin of The Apostles' Creed:

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith used in the Western Church. Like other early creeds, another being the Nicene Creed, it falls into three sections dealing with God, the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The text was originally initiated to act as a litmus test against the infiltration of **Gnosticism or Marcionism** into the early church.

- **The Gnostics-** Does not except Jesus dualism, but only that he was the Son of God who assumed a ghost like phantasmal human experiencing, and could have never been crucified, let alone dead and buried. They were into Gnosis or divine enlightenment of knowledge.
- **The Marcionist-** Marcion of Sinope at Rome (144 A.D.) believed only in a Gospel of Love, he deleted the OT from the biblical cannon. The God of the OT, the God of Law, was a different and lesser God than the God of the NT, the God of Jesus thus the God of Love. The creed has since been able to stand up as a clear detector of all quasi-Christian and cultic sects since. He accepted 10 of the 24 chapters of Luke and 10 of Paul's Epistles to be his canon.

In an effort to define the basic elements of the Christianity around 150AD the basis of The Apostles' Creed then called "The Symbol of Faith" was established. To affirm this creed prevented those with Gnostic or Marcionist theologies from entering the community of Christian Faith. In the baptisms of Christians having gone through a 3-year period of Confirmation it was used originally as a series of 3 questions. The confirmand was immersed after each of the three questions and answers were given. Its title is first found in a letter of St., Ambrose in 390AD., by which time the legend of its joint composition by the Apostles was current. By the early Middle Ages, it was used throughout in Christian Baptism. By the 7th & 9th century it secured a place in the daily offices, it is found in the Book of Common Prayer and is used to this day as one of the oldest and most historical professions of the Christian Faith.

iii. The Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

~

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell,
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand
of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge
the quick and the dead.**

~

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

iv. Key Doctrines found within!

- _____ - Father, Son & Holy Spirit
- _____
- _____ - Son of God and Son of Man
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

v. The Support Beams of the Church are found in its Basic Core Doctrine. Let's take a look at these Practical Rules of God.

"The Support Beams" are the Core Doctrine or what I like to call **"The Biggies: The essential load supporting beams of The House of God."** They have four basic ground rules:

1. They are un-_____: Not ours to touch they are God's Practical Rules of Faith.
2. They are un-_____: Regardless of the timeline, current social-trends and/or the various cultural views these support beams remain the same just as our *"God remains the same yesterday, today & tomorrow."*
3. They are un-_____: Whether you are Jack & Jill in the pew, Rev. Marvelous, Joe Apostle, Super Bishop or Popus Patitus these support beams remain the same. They are beyond man's ability to move—they are fixed and held by the very hand & truth of God.
4. They are un-_____: When people come to the Church of Jesus Christ whether they are new members or long standing, impoverished or the wealthiest, the thickest or the most enlightened; these Beams will stand as they are because they are complete!

vi. The Support Beams- the Biggies!

1. _____ - God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

1. **God as _____** - God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.
 2. **God as _____** - Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.
 3. **God as _____** - The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.
2. _____ - The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.
 3. _____ - Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

4. _____ - Comes in Jesus Christ who become the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Details of The Atonement:

In His death on the cross, Jesus Christ fulfilled and replaced the Old Testament sacrificial system. He offered up Himself as the supreme, once-for-all **sacrifice of atonement** through the shedding of his **blood**. By Jesus' one act of righteousness, **salvation** as a free gift is for all who **believe & confess Him as Savior & Lord**.

5. _____ - The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Pastor Troy's ordination version writings:

The Resurrection can pertain to that of, The Christ, on that first Easter Morning or to the Resurrection of the dead at the second coming. In reference to the first, it is a fundamental base of Christianity, without which Christian doctrine and Scripture becomes a word without integrity. This is testified to by its inclusion in the Apostles' Creed, one of the earliest formulas used for admission into the Christian community. It is the very basis of Christian preaching that as Christ was resurrected we might also be born again. It

is the belief that Christ himself bore the sin of the world, died upon the cross, was buried, and on the third day took up his life again that we might know that the promises of God and the forgiveness of sin was in his power to give. In reference to the second, the Resurrection of the dead, it is also a fundamental base of Christianity. Again it, as well as the next doctrine, "eternal life", are noted by their inclusion in the last line of the Apostles' Creed, "the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." The resurrection of the body is the Christian belief that at the Parousia² (*par-oo-see'-ah*) those saints having died, and those that are living, shall enter into a new heavenly body for eternity.

6. _____ - The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our

² **The Parousia or Return of the Messiah-** The personal and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ is our hope and has a vital bearing on the personal life and witness of the *Biblical Functioning Faithful Follower of Jesus*. In this time, we believe there will be a bodily resurrection of the all the dead; *of the believer to eternal life with the Lord and of the unbeliever to eternal judgment.*

commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

7. _____ - The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.
8. _____ - The Church is composed of all such persons (*Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers*) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

e. Review of Community of Faith Constitution, Article IV Statement of Faith. (*See Special Hand out*)

f. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK EITHER CONTINUE PART 1 ADVANCE OR BEGIN PART II
Building Spiritual Stamina: “*The Spiritual Disciplines*”

HAND OUT: SESSION 4- THE SUPPORT BEAMS

SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET MASTER:

1. Group Name _____ Church.
2. Your Groups definition of "Doctrine":
3. List your top 4-10 key doctrines with a simple definition or description of each of these doctrines.

1. _____:

2. _____:

3. _____:

4. _____:

5. _____:

6. _____:

7. _____:

8. _____:

9. _____:

10. _____:

HAND OUT- SESSION 4

ARTICLE IV from Constitution of Community of Faith

ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The core beliefs of Community of Faith Church are grounded in Biblical truth and summed up by the "Apostles' Creed".

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church***, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***The holy Catholic Church is a traditional statement. This is not a reference to the Roman Catholic denomination. Rather, it refers to the Unified body of Christ as seen in scripture. The word "catholic" means united.

Summary of our Core Beliefs:

The Trinity/Triune God: God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

God as Father: God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.

God as Son: Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.

God as Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

Free Will: The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.

Original Sin: Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

The Atonement: Comes in Jesus Christ who became the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Resurrection: The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Justification by Faith: The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Word of God: The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New Testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.

The Church: The Church is composed of all such persons (Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head. WE BELIEVE:

Additional Theological & Biblical Reference to our Core Beliefs:

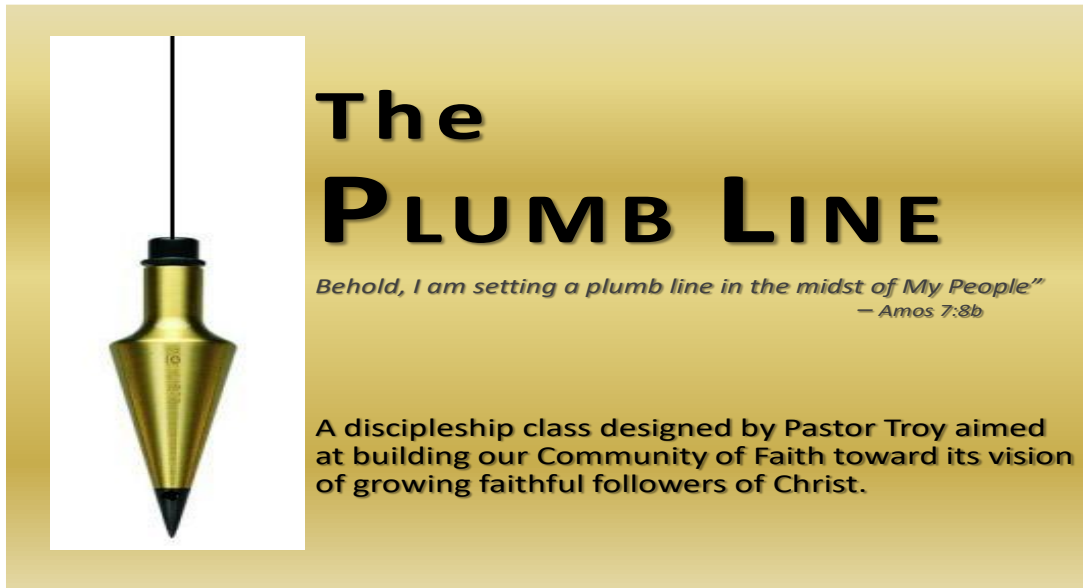
1. **God, the Father:** God, assisted by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, made the heavens and the earth. He is referred to by Jesus as Father and by Paul as Abba. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Genesis 1:1; Psalms 68: 5; Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 26:39; Romans 8:15; James 1:17.
2. **The Person and Work of Christ:** The Lord Jesus, the Christ, and the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Our redemption and salvation are guaranteed to us by His physical resurrection from the dead. Luke 1:38; John 1:1, 14 and 18; Romans 3:24-26; I Corinthians 15:4; Colossians 1:15-20; I John 2:2.
3. **The Personality of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, regenerates believers in Christ, sets each member in the Body of Christ, the church; indwells them, seals them unto the day of redemption, teaches all truth and bestows spiritual gifts upon each saved believer. Jesus baptizes and fills with the Holy Spirit those yielded to Him. John 15:26; 16:7-15; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; I John 2:27.
4. **Holy Scriptures:** The Holy Bible, as set out in the original manuscripts, is the verbally inspired Word of God; authoritative, inerrant, and God-breathed. Matthew 5: 18; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21.
5. **Holiness:** God has called Christians out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – from sin to holiness. It is God's will that we partake of His nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Matthew 5:48; John 8:1-11; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16; II Peter 1:4.
6. **Salvation:** Salvation is a gift of God through grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. John 1:12; Romans 3:25-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.
7. **The New Creation:** God's masterful work of creating the universe by His Word is exceeded only by the greatest masterpiece of His workmanship, namely, a Christian. Becoming a new creation helps us

to face life knowing that our identification with Christ enables us to hold fast to our confession, overcome in life and be more than conquerors in Christ. II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.

8. **The Total Depravity of Man:** Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's sin, the human race fell. Man inherited a sinful nature and became alienated from God. Man is totally unable to regain his former position by or through his own means. Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 53:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:12; I John 1:8.
9. **The Church:** The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is vested all the power for its government. According to His commandments, Christians are to associate themselves into communities of local churches. God admonishes His people to assemble regularly for worship. God still heals, delivers, and works miracles through His church. Deuteronomy 12: 5-7; Isaiah 53:5; John 14:12-14; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:25; 13:8; James 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24.
10. **The Head of the Church:** The Head of the Church is Christ Himself. He is the final and ultimate authority in all matters of faith, doctrine, and decision. All divinely approved church practices in the New Testament reflect the Church's own acknowledgement of God's hand directing the Church. Where the Church failed to submit itself to Christ, He spoke firmly and unequivocally in denunciation. He expresses His will today through the Holy Spirit and the written Word. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 5:27; 14:16-18 and 26; 16:13-14; 17:2; Acts 13:2-4; 14:26-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 2 and 3.
11. **Baptism:** Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ; of remission of sins and of his giving himself up to God, and to live and walk in newness of life. It is not a prerequisite to salvation. Matthew 3:6-8; Mark 1:5, 9 and 15; Luke 3:3-16; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.
12. **The Lord's Day:** The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance and should be employed in exercise of worship and spiritual devotion. Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 2:27-28; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.
13. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and juice of grapes; and to be observed by His Church until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice but is designed to commemorate His death and our communion with Him and with our church fellowship. It is open to all believers. Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-26.
14. **Citizenship:** Civil government is of divine appointment and established by God for the good order of human society. Government officials are to be prayed for and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7.
15. **Marriage:** The first institution that God gave mankind was marriage. He joined a man and a woman in a special and sacred union. To this union He gave a special gift – sexuality. This gift expressed in any other form (example: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, transsexuality, or bestiality) does not have God's approval. Genesis 2:18-25; 3:16; 4:1; Exodus 20:14 and 17; Song of Solomon; Matthew 19:1-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; Revelation 19:7-9.
16. **The Responsibility of Believers:** All believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior. It is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scripture and seek to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world. Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16 and 25; II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:16-20.
17. **Sanctity of Life:** All human life was created by God and should be valued. The valueless ending of human life is not approved of by Him. Abortion and euthanasia are not acceptable means of dealing with life's difficulties. Exodus 20:13; II Peter 3:19.
18. **Stewardship:** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. All we have and are we owe to Him. We recognize the Lord as owner of all our possessions. Christians cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally should contribute their talents, abilities and possessions to advancing the Savior's cause on earth. The purpose of the tithe is to enable us to discharge some of

the tremendous sense of obligation and indebtedness we have toward God and to teach us to always put God first in our lives. Deuteronomy 14:23; Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4 and 19-21; Luke 12:16-21; Acts 2:44-47; Romans 6:6-22; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Philippians 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18-19.

19. **Last Things:** At the end of the age, every person will be judged. The unrighteous will go to Hell, a place of everlasting punishment. The righteous, through Christ, will receive their reward and dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; Revelation 19-22.
20. **The Second Coming of Christ:** Jesus will return personally and visibly to the earth according to His promise. Believers are to live sensible, righteous, and godly lives in the present age looking for His imminent return. Matthew 24:27-44; Titus 2:12-13.



Student Booklet- with Blanks

THE PLUMB LINE- Class Outline

PART I BASIC: Accepting our Responsibility as Disciples

1. **Introduction:** *"The Plumb Line"*
2. **The Master Builder:** *"Who is God? Who are we?"*
3. **The Master's Plan:** *"God's Basic Plan of Salvation"*
4. **The Support Beams:** *"Basic Doctrine"*

PART I ADVANCE:

5. **Building Spiritual Stamina:** *"The Spiritual Disciplines"*
6. **Styling It:** *"From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street"*

PART II BASIC: Assisting in Spreading & Living out our Responsibility as Disciples

7. **The Big House:** *"The Church- It's Nature, Mission and Power."*
8. **Assessment Tools:** *"Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase."*
9. **Building Dynamics:** *"Shepherding & Flock Dynamics"*

PART II ADVANCE:

10. **Variances & Code:** *"Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader"*
11. **Driveways:** *"The Wesleyan Way"*
12. **THE WRAP: Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman & Finishing Touches:**
"Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!"

5. PART I **ADVANCE**- Building Spiritual Stamina: “*The Spiritual Disciplines.*”

(REVIEW)

a. The Keys to Walking out God’s Plan of Salvation are found in Building Spiritual Stamina through the Spiritual Disciplines. Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline* is one of the modern experts in this field and we will let him guide us as we seek to Build Spiritual Stamina through the Spiritual Disciplines.

i. The _____:

1. _____ - Is the process of growing the believers mind into the mind of Christ that they may be ***Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers*** of Jesus Christ.

Foster tells us Study involves four steps: (64-66)

- A. _____.
- B. _____.
- C. _____.
- D. _____.

- The Old Testament instructs the Israelites to write the Laws on gates and doorposts and bind them to their wrists and between their eyes.

Deuteronomy 11:18-23 nkjv

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth. ²² “For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.

- Paul gives one of the best reasons that each of us should strive to become ***Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers*** OF JESUS with excellence.

Romans 12:2 nkjv

And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Ultimately, we cannot know the truth without studying that truth which is found in the _____ - _____. Our learning does not come by _____ but by _____!

John 8:31-32 nkjv

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

2. _____ - ***“Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.”*** (pg. 33)

- To be like Jesus is to be a man or woman of prayer, likewise the disciples sought to be like Jesus when they asked Him in **Luke 11:1** *“to teach us to pray!”*
- Jesus taught us the ultimate key to prayer in His greatest trial. **Luke 22:42** *“Nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done”*
- Our Prayer has incredible power both here and in the Kingdom. **Matthew 18:16** *“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*
- The key to effective prayer is to learn to pray not only _____ did, _____ for the things of God. **James 4:3** *“Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”*

John Wesley said **"God does nothing but in answer to prayer."** He lived by this as Wesley devoted two hours daily for prayer!

A basic primer in Personal Prayer:

ACTS: **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving & Supplication.**

3. _____ - It is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His word. IT'S THAT SIMPLE!

The model for Christian Meditation is found in the _____ and in the _____.

1. Jesus had a practice of going to that _____.

- **Matthew 14:13a**

"When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself..."

- **Matthew 6:6a**

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*;..."

2. David wrote the greatest book ever for Meditation.

- **Psalm 1:2**

"But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law, he meditates day and night."

- **Psalm 63:3**

"Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life, My lips shall praise You."

- **Psalm 119:148**

"My eyes are awake through the *night* watches, That I may meditate on Your Word."

A SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING MEDITATION:

Don't confuse this with any concept connected to Eastern Religions. Foster tells us **"Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind; Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind. The two ideas are quite different."** (pg. 20)

CHALLENGE: How about taking our DAILY WALK for the next week and reading it as your act of Study- this should take about 10 minutes, then spending about 10 minutes in prayer for you, your family, your church & community. And then spend 10 minutes meditating on your study and prayer with God—listening for God's voice for your life. (30 minutes of time with God!)

4. _____ - Fasting involves the abstaining or self-denial from a normative activity, typically from all (or some in a partial fast) food, solid or liquid, but not from water, for spiritual reasons.

What do Moses the Patriarch, King David, The Great Prophet Elijah, Queen Ester, Daniel of the Lion's Den, Anna the Prophetess, Paul the Gentile Apostle, along with Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards and so many more, and oh did I forget JESUS CHRIST have in common. _____!

Jesus indicates fasting should be _____ for us as Biblical Functioning Faithful Followers of Jesus.

- Jesus gives us our first hint that it is expected, " _____"!

Matthew 6:16-18 nkjv

"Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but **to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret** will reward you openly.

- Jesus then gives us our _____ for Fasting. We are to Fast in the time of our separation from and until the return of the bridegroom.

Matthew 9:15 nkjv

And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

When we are fasting, Foster reminds us, " _____" on God!

Fasting reminds us that we are sustained "*...by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" (Mat 4:4b) It is a declaration, an act of worship to our God who is our SUSTAINER, REDEEMER, & KING!

CHALLENGE: Try a 3-day fast and celebrate it by breaking it on SUNDAY!

ii. The _____:

1. _____ - My personal definition of simplicity is _____ . ***“God made man simple; man’s complex problems are of his own devising” (Ecc 7:30 jb phillips)***

1. **Matthew 6:25** reveals the heart of our _____.
“Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

• **John Wesley has a simple set of rules to model the Spiritual Discipline of SIMPLICITY.** They are found in the 3 Wesleyan Rules:

1. “ _____ !”
2. “ _____ ”
3. “ _____ .”

• **Richard Foster has 10 great rules to keep your life simple and maintaining your walk with Christ:**

1. “Buy things for their usefulness rather than their _____.”
2. “Reject anything that is producing an _____.”
3. “Develop a habit of _____.”
4. “Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry.”
5. “Learn to enjoy things without _____.”
6. “Develop a deeper appreciation for the _____.”
7. “Look with a healthy skepticism at all _____, _____ schemes.”
8. “Obey Jesus’ instructions about plain, honest speech. Let what you say be simply ‘ _____ ’ or ‘ _____ ’; anything more than this comes from evil” (Matthew 5:37)
9. “Reject anything that breeds the _____.”
10. “Shun anything that distracts you from _____.”

CHALLENGE: Might you attempt to live by these rules for one 7-day period? I don’t think it will kill you.

2. _____ - **Is more a state of mind and heart than it is a place. In that case it can be found almost anywhere!**

- Jesus began his ministry with 40 days in the desert- _____!
Matt 4:1-11
- Before Jesus chose the 12, He spent the night- _____!
Luke 6:12

- After the great miracle of the feeding of the 5000 Jesus went to be- _____! (Matt 14:23)

“Without silence there is no solitude.” But no solitude can be found without listening to God. Teresa of Avila said- ***“Settle yourself in solitude and you will come upon Him in yourself.”*** (pg. 96)

CHALLENGE: Set aside 3-4 hours this week for the purpose of examining your life against God’s Plan for your life. Reflecting on what would be pleasing and displeasing to God and where you can better align your life with God’s plan for it!

3. _____ & _____ - The Combo- Is a concept of authority that runs completely counter to the thing of the systems of this world. Where ***“Leadership is found in becoming the _____ . Power is discovered in _____.”*** (pg. 115)

Foster’s 7 Acts of Submission: (122-123)

1. “The first act of submission is to the _____.”
2. “The second act of submission is to the _____.”
3. “The third act of submission is to our _____.”
4. “The fourth act of submission is to our _____ and those we meet in the course of our daily lives.”
5. “The fifth act of submission is to the believing community, the body of Christ.”
6. “The sixth act of submission is to the _____ & _____ in every culture there are the ‘widows and orphans’; that is the helpless, the undefended (James 1:27).
7. “The seventh act of submission is to the world. We live in an interdependent, international community. We cannot live in isolation.”

_____ understands these concepts in your heart, mind, and spirit. _____ is living these out in your WALK!

Submission brings with it a key Caution-
“The limits of the Discipline of submission are at the points at which it becomes destructive. It then becomes a denial of the law of love as taught by Jesus and is an affront to genuine biblical submission.”(pg. 120)

CHALLENGE: How about attempting one act of Submission & Service between now and Sunday, and two between now and our next class? See if it hurts!

iii. The _____:

1. _____ - Is the Doorway to your faith not just initially but daily as we walk with God. Confession defeats pride, acknowledges our failure, receives God's mercy and dispenses the greatest gift of God—His Amazing Grace!

- Confession is the Door **to our Walk with God.**

Romans 10:9-10 nkjv

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- Confession is how we **maintain our Walk with God.**

James 5:16 nkjv

Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- Our Confessions one to another are the **KEY to allowing God's grace to change our lives**, allowing us to become a part of His Church and ultimately change the course of this World.

John 20:23 nkjv

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

- You say by what authority. I say by your Ordination as a fellow ***Biblically Functioning Faithful Follower.***

1 Peter 2:9 nkjv

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"

CHALLENGE: When is the last time you had a time of confession with someone that can offering you the forgiveness of God.

2. _____ - **“Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father.”** It takes place in both our personal time and in our corporate gathering. (58)

Bottom line, if the Lord is to be your Lord, then He must take the first place in your life and that is a place of worship. After all the first commandment of Jesus is *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength”* (Mark 12:30)

Foster says this so well: *“The divine priority is **worship first, service second.** Our lives are to be punctuated with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. Service flows out of worship. Service as a substitute for worship is idolatry.”* (pg. 161)

Matthew 4:10b nkjv

“You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve...”

John 4:23 nkjv

“The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

CHALLENGE: How about trying it personally Thursday, Friday & Saturday as well as corporately on Sunday?

3. _____ - **Behind every witness is another witness.**

- Elisha sought guidance from **Elijah.**
- Saul/Paul was mentored by **Barnabas.**
- Timothy & Titus were received guidance from **Paul.**

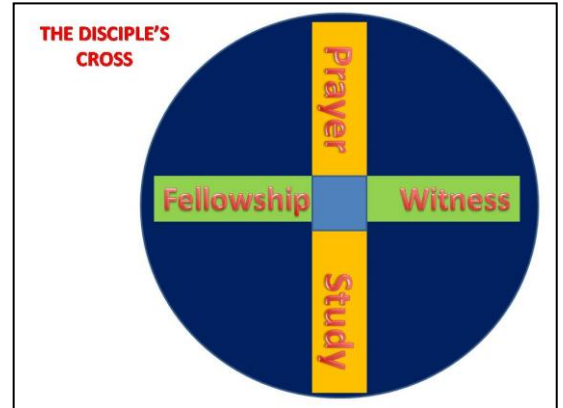
The whole concept of guidance fits right with the way in which I have been trained in that we all must work through the stages of becoming an _____, then a _____ and then a _____. This is the growth curve for **Growing Faithful Followers of Christ** and cannot be done in isolation but requires SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE!

CHALLENGE: Who do you seek Spiritual Guidance from? Who is your FRED, ELIJA, BARNABAS, OR PAUL?

b. A SIMPLE WAY TO WALK OUT YOUR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:

_____ is the way to follow-

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____



c. Small Group Break Out:

- i. What are some other Spiritual Disciplines that were not talked about in our lesson today that you would like to add to the list? *(Notes.)*
- ii. Which Spiritual Discipline do you see being practiced best today in the Church? Which Spiritual Discipline do you see being practiced the least today in the Church? *(Notes.)*
- iii. Which Spiritual Discipline is most dear to your Walk with God today? Which Spiritual Discipline would you like to add to improve your Walk with God tomorrow? *(Notes.)*
- iv. Take a look at the section e. Building Spiritual Stamina-Challenge. Which one of these challenges would you be willing to take on in the next seven days? *(You are challenged to ask one of the small group members to be your accountability partner during this challenge period!)* *(Notes.)*

d. Group Share on small group learning from the 3 questions.
(Notes.)

e. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK

Styling It: *“From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street”*

HAND OUT- SESSION 5:

Building Spiritual Stamina- CHALLENGE:

- i. Study:** *(See Meditation)*
- ii. Prayer:** *(See Meditation)*
- iii. Meditation:**
CHALLENGE: How about taking our DAILY WALK for the next week and reading it as your act of Study- this should take about 10 minutes, then spending about 10 minutes in prayer for you, your family, your church & community. And then spend 10 minutes meditating on your study and prayer with God—listening for God’s voice for your life.
- iv. Fasting**
CHALLENGE: Try a 3-day fast and celebrate it by breaking it on SUNDAY!
- v. Simplicity**
CHALLENGE: Might you attempt to live by these rules for one 7-day period? I don’t think it will kill you.
- vi. Solitude**
CHALLENGE: Set aside 3-4 hours this week for the purpose of examining your life against God’s Plan for your life. Reflecting on what would be pleasing and displeasing to God and where you can better align your life with God’s plan for it!
- vii. Submission & Service**
CHALLENGE: How about attempting one act of Submission & Service between now and Sunday, and two between now and our next class? See if it hurts!
- viii. Confession**
CHALLENGE: When is the last time you have had serious time of confession with someone that can offering you the forgiveness of God.
- ix. Worship**
CHALLENGE: How about trying it personally Thursday, Friday & Saturday as well as corporately on Sunday?
- x. Guidance or Coaching**
CHALLENGE: Who do you seek Spiritual Guidance from? Who is your FRED, ELIJA, BARNABAS, OR PAUL?

6. **PART I ADVANCE- Styling It:** “From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street”

(REVIEW)

Section I: See Chart 1 & 2

"Seven Steps from the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street."

1. _____ **(33-312 AD):** This is the first period in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is ushered in beginning in Acts 2:1 in Jerusalem in the Upper Room, on the Day the Jews celebrated the first Pentecost after Jesus’ death. On this day the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church of Jesus Christ, and it was endued with the power to become His Presence and Commissioned for His “Gospel Mission” to the World.

Acts 2:1-4 nkjv

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Key events in the Apostolic Age:

- The Ministry of the Apostles and their disciples.
- The Early Development of the Apostles Creed as the Symbol of Faith for Baptism in 150 A.D.
- The early church fathers of Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian.

2. **313-603**: This is the second major period in the age of the church, when it moved from being the persecuted minority and intolerant faith of the Christians to becoming the tolerated faith of the state. This begins with the Emperor Constantine who in 313 A.D. had a vision from the Lord.

It was October, 312 AD Constantine and his troops marched toward Rome to do battle with his opponent, another would-be emperor, the tyrannical Maxentius. It was the greatest challenge the gifted young general had ever faced. The stakes were high: Who would control the mightiest empire that had ever appeared up to that time on the face of earth?

As Constantine stopped to consider his battle plans, he realized he needed greater power than just military force. Maxentius was relying on magical enchantments. But how should Constantine pray? His father was a monotheist, believing there was only one God over all. Constantine saw that the pagan gods failed to protect their worshipers. So he sought his father's God in prayer, pleading for him to tell him who he was and to stretch forth his hand to help him. As he prayed (it was a little after noon), Constantine had an absorbing vision. He saw the sign of the cross emblazoned across the sky and the words *In hoc signo vinces*, "In this sign you will win."

Constantine was struck with amazement, along with his whole army (which also witnessed the miracle). That night in his sleep it was confirmed: this was the Christ of God he was dealing with. So went the report of Eusebius.

Constantine accepted the vision. He adopted the sign. He had the cross inscribed on his soldiers' armor. He went into battle. Even though his forces were outnumbered, he won.
**Taken from Christian History Timeline @ www.christianhistorytimeline.com- Glimpses #12: A Vision of Triumph; Constantine Wins the Day for Christianity.*

Christianity becomes the in thing and becomes institutionalized. During this period the church developed into two main centers the East led by the Church of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem and the West led by the Bishop of Rome. There were lots of theological challenges by off-shoots during this age like Nestorians (d.428) who saw Son of God and Son of Man as two different people in one, a more intense Gnostic concept. Also, Pelagianism (d.420) who argued that salvation comes by man's first steps apart from divine grace and he denied original sin. There were many other derivatives.

Key events in the State Church Age:

- Constantine's vision and conversion in 312 A.D.
- The Council of Nicaea was led by Athanasius in 325 which produced the Nicene Creed.

The issues of Nicaea boil down to this. If Christ is not God, how can he overcome the infinite gap between God and man? If a created being could do it, there were angels aplenty with the power. Indeed, why could not any good man himself bridge the gap? On the other hand, Jesus had to be truly man, otherwise how could he represent mankind?

At some point the council decided their best course was to write a creed that testified to what they believed. The creed of Nicaea became a document of fundamental importance to the church. That so many of the bishops who approved it had suffered greatly for Christ only added to its significance. The council itself was a forerunner to many more, some international, some regional. Those councils which came after also grappled with issues of Christ's humanity and deity. Was he one person or two? Was he God while in his mother's womb? Did he have just one will? Which books belong in the Bible? The seventh ecumenical church council was also held at Nicaea.

* *Christian History Timeline at www.christianhistorytimeline.com **God or Man? Asks Nicaea Council***

THE NICENE CREED OF 325

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost. Amen.

- Other great leaders of the Church: Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Athanasius and the Creed of Christ (356).
- 2nd Council of Constantinople. (553).
- Gregory the Great becomes a Reluctant Pontiff and begins to separate the Catholic Church from the State. A Papal Church is born.

3. **which includes the Dark Ages (604-1517):**

The Bishop of Rome, in 604, becomes the Papal Supremacy, Gregory the Great. He basically pulls away from control from state control and the Church becomes an institution of itself. This age included the rise of Islam 570-632 with the life of Mohammed. It is marked by the West and East Church coming to the great divide between Roman Catholics. The main issues were over the papal claims and *Filioque-and the Son-* the double procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and Son. In 589 the 3rd Council of Toledo changed the Nicene Creed to read: "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and giver of life, who from the Father **and the son** proceeds." The Eastern church disagreed with the double procession. From here Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy began taking different roads until 1054.

**THE GREAT SCHISM July 6,1054
SCHISM BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEGINS!**

The break came when Michael Cerularius was Patriarch of Constantinople and St. Leo pope in Rome. In 1053, Cerularius circulated a treatise criticizing in strong terms the practices of the Western church. Catholics did not allow their clergy to marry. This was contrary to scripture and tradition, said Cerularius. And Catholics used unleavened bread in their Eucharist. But the most serious concern was that the Latin church had added the word "filioque" to the Nicene creed, saying the Holy Spirit proceeded from both Father and Son.

It would seem that this was more political to Leo than religious, as it was pressed upon him by the Franks. Cerularius excommunicated all bishops of Constantinople who used the Western ritual and closed down their churches. This incensed Leo. He demanded that Cerularius submit to the pope. Any church which refused to recognize the pontiff as supreme was an assembly of heretics, he said--a synagogue of Satan. The Eastern patriarch wasn't about to accept this characterization. The five patriarchs, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome were equals in his eyes. The bishop of Rome, as patriarch of the West, was given the courtesy title of "first among equals" and in a tie vote he could make the final determination according to tradition. Rome's growing claims to authority were deemed unacceptable to the other patriarchs, who believed (and who still believe) that Christ alone is the head of the church. * *Christian History Timeline at www.christianhistorytimeline.com*
Schism between East and West Began.

Finally, this period includes the dark ages, the crusades, and the fall of Jerusalem from Christian control in 1291, after many years of crusade battles against the Turks. Constantinople was finally captured by Moslems in 1453, which is the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

4. **1517-1700** In 1517 a young German priest/monk Martin Luther protests against the corruption of Rome and the abuses taking place through the sale of indulgences. In response to his protest Luther drew up 95 Thesis against indulgences and nailed them to the door of the Schlosskirche Castle (Castle Church) at Wittenberg. It was the second most famous nailing in Christian history and the shot heard around the world. It led to the Protestant Reformation and break off from the Catholic Church. It was fueled by other such schisms taking place across Europe. Other Radical Reformers begin to break away forming Anabaptist, Congregationalist, Mennonites, Amish and more. The Swiss Reformer- Ulrich Zwingli (1522) pulls away. John Calvin and The Reformed Tradition begins its reform in Geneva. Calvin is most famous for his TULIP acronym. Finally in 1534 with different motives England under Henry VIII has the Bishop of Canterbury succeed. The Church of England draws up their own Book of Common Prayer and formally separates from the Roman church over the issue of political-spiritual control and a monarchial divorce. In the new Anglican Church the King is the Spiritual leader replacing Papal authority. The last major move was the Remonstrance of 1610, this was in response to Calvinism. Led by Dutch Reformer Jakob Arminius, the movement stood against the doctrine of predestination. The Arminians insisted that the Divine sovereignty was compatible with a real free will in man; that Christ died for all men and not only forth elect; and that predestination was unbiblical. The Holiness/Pietistic movement springs partly from this lineage. No one has had more of an influence on the formation of our modern protestant theology today than the Arminian argument. Now let's back up and look at Calvin's TULIP and the Arminian and Lutheran differences in the family of the Great Protestant Reformers.

TULIP- CLASSIC 5 POINT CALVINISM

**Via Wikipedia- definition of Calvinism*

The five points therefore function as a summary of the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, but not as a complete summation of Calvin's writings or of the theology of the Reformed churches in general. In English, they are sometimes referred to by the acronym TULIP(see below), though this puts them in a different order than the Canons of Dort. The central assertion of these canons is that God is able to save every person upon whom he has mercy and that his efforts are not frustrated by the unrighteousness or the inability of humans.

- **"Total depravity"**: This doctrine, also called "total inability," asserts that as a consequence of the fall of man into sin, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin. People are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures. (The term "total" in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as possible.)
- **"Unconditional election"**: This doctrine asserts that God's choice from eternity of those whom he will bring to himself is not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people. Rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God's mercy alone.
- **"Limited atonement"**: Also called "particular redemption" or "definite atonement," this doctrine asserts that Jesus's substitutionary atonement was definite and certain in its design and accomplishment. This implies that only the sins of the elect were atoned for by Jesus's death. Calvinists do not believe, however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power (in other words, God could have elected everyone and used it to atone for them all), but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it is designed for some and not all. Hence, Calvinists hold that the atonement is sufficient for all and efficient for the elect. The doctrine is driven by the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and their understanding of the nature of the atonement.
- **"Irresistible grace"**: This doctrine, also called "efficacious grace," asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (that is, the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that every influence of God's Holy Spirit cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ."
- **"Perseverance of the saints"**: Perseverance (or preservation) of the saints (The word "saints" is used in the Biblical sense to refer to all who are set apart by God, and not in the technical sense of one who is exceptionally holy, canonized, or in heaven). The doctrine asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return. * added-- *Also known as "Once saved always Saved."*

William Booth 1861, and also *The Holiness Church* with its Wesleyan connection and leanings on perfection. From there springs forth the Nazarene off-shoots which heads us right toward the birth of Pentecostalism. During this time protestant Gospel work emerges all over China, Asia, and Africa. It is a new age as the Holiness period leads to a new missionary age, unknown since the age of the Apostles.

6. _____ & _____ (1904-1968):

The Azusa Street Revival was a historic Pentecostal revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles, California, and was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher. It began with a meeting on April 14, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. The revival was characterized by ecstatic spiritual experiences accompanied by speaking in tongues, dramatic worship services, and inter-racial mingling. The participants received criticism from secular media and Christian theologians for behaviors considered to be outrageous and unorthodox, especially at the time. Today, the revival is considered by historians to be the primary catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century. Seymour and the other revivalists at the Apostolic Faith Mission on **Azusa Street held to five core beliefs:**

1. **Salvation** by **Faith**.
2. **Sanctification** (or **Holiness**) of the believer.
3. **Tongues** as evidence of **Baptism** with the Holy Spirit.
4. **Faith healing** as part of God's **redemption**.
5. The "very soon" return of **Christ**.

Doctrinal differences abounded, and many separate organizations and denominations sprung from the initial revivals. The **Church of God in Christ** was formed in 1907, the **Assemblies of God** and **United Pentecostal Church** were

formed in 1914, the Pentecostal Church of God was formed in 1919 at the Sharon Bible School.

Today, there are more than 500 million Pentecostal and charismatic believers across the globe. The Pentecostal denomination is currently second in size behind the Roman Catholic Church and is the fastest-growing form of Christianity today. The Azusa Street Revival is commonly regarded as the beginning of the modern-day Pentecostal Movement.

The Pentecostal Movement birthed in the 1906-1909 revival at Azusa Street Mission was *“the logical outcome of the holiness crusade which had vexed American Protestantism...and the Methodist Church.”* It was *“the child of the holiness movement”* and the grandchild of Methodism. *“Practically all the early Pentecostal leaders were firm advocates of sanctification as a ‘second work of grace’ and...added”* Holy Ghost baptism as a *“third blessing”*. *Quotes taken from Regent University School of Divinity Professor on Church History Dr. Vinson Synan.

7. _____ **(1969-Present):** In 1969 the Pentecostal Movement has a revival among the laity. The Charismatic Renewal started within the Roman Catholic Church and worked its way into the Protestant Churches, particularly reigniting the Holiness movement to a whole new level. It also produced numerous streams of new local and independent churches around the world, particularly in America.

Does this story seem familiar? It is your most recent history.

Section II.

Our Major Points of Connection to the Apostolic Church

- a. We share in the **Apostolic witness** to Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord.
- b. It took so many faithful servants of God to get the witness of the Apostles from Step 1 to us today in Step 7.
- c. We accept as part of our identity with the Christian Church:
 1. The **Cannon of Scripture** found in the **39** Books of the OT and **27** Books of the NT.
 2. Ecumenical Creeds from Nicaea as well as **The Apostles' Creed**. *(These Creeds have set the boundaries for acceptable Christian Doctrine.)*
 3. We are a by-product of **The Protestant Reformation** of the 16th with an undoubtedly **Arminian** and **Wesleyan Holiness Twist**, add to that a fresh dose of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Ghost from **Azusa Street** and a supped-up laity turbocharged radically for Jesus through the modern day **Charismatic Renewal**.

SMALL GROUP-Small Group Breakout Questions:

- What is your faith background of origin?
- Which of the 7 ages did you most resonate with?
- How do you think we connect with the Apostolic Age?
- Where do you think we are in the current age?
- What do you think is next?

NEXT WEEK

PART II BASIC: The Big House:

“The Church- It’s Nature, Mission and Power.”

TABLE 1- THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

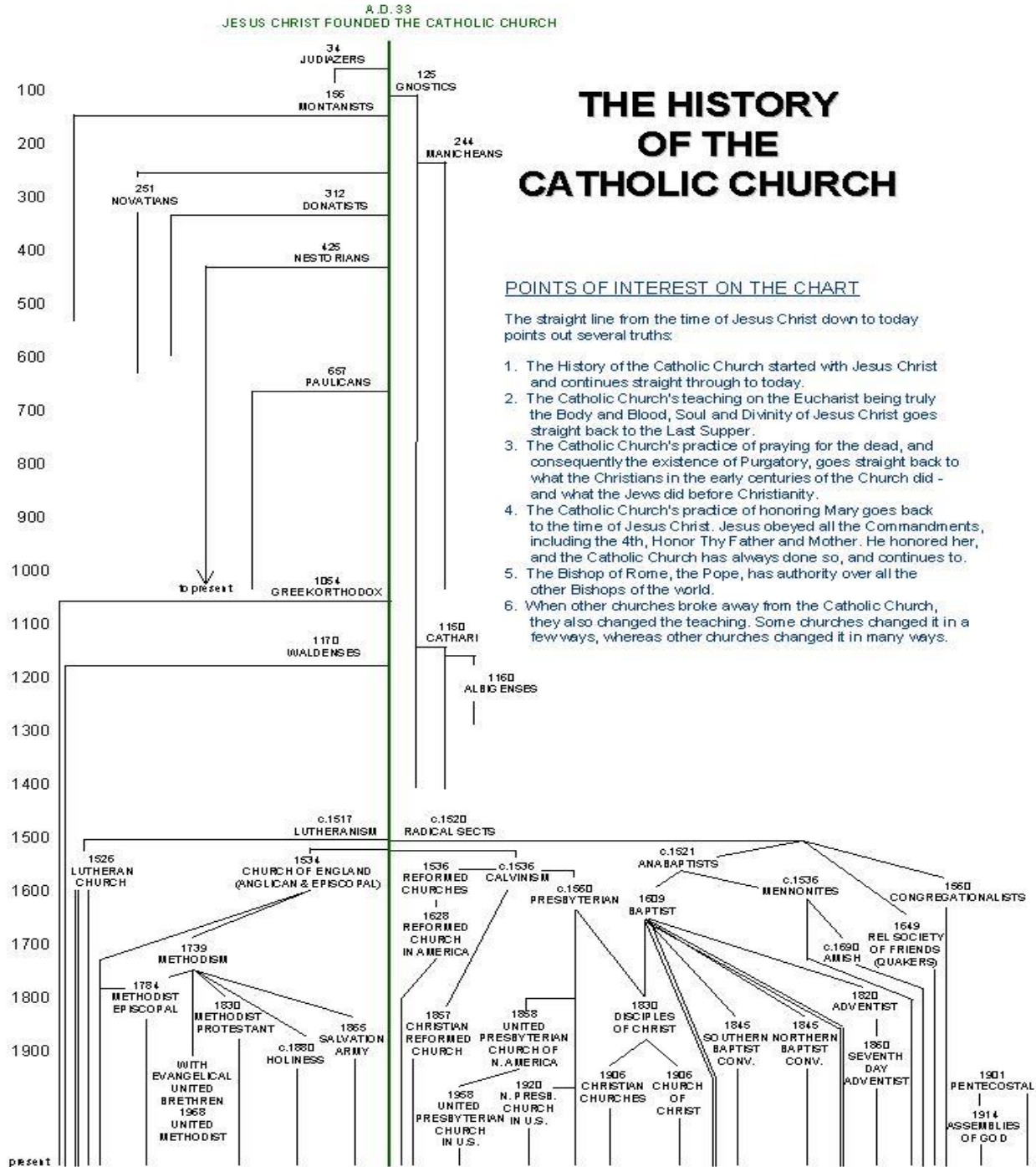
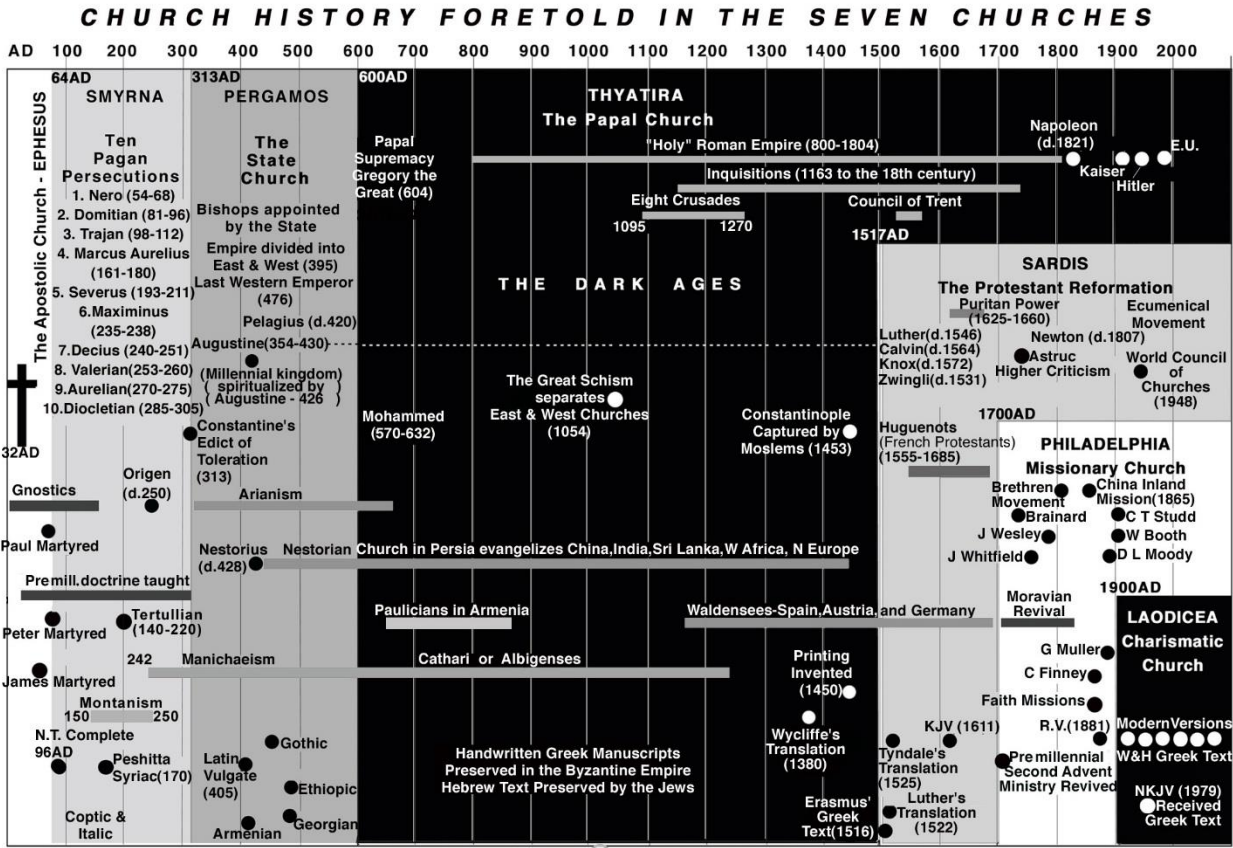
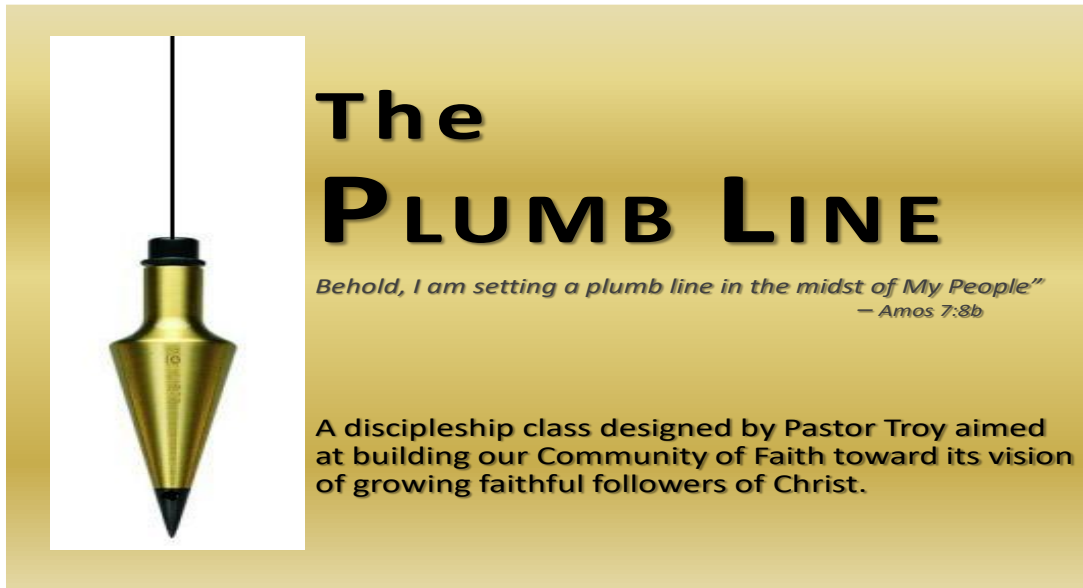


TABLE 2- CHURCH HISTORY FORETOLD IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES





Student Booklet- with Blanks

THE PLUMB LINE- Class Outline

PART I BASIC: Accepting our Responsibility as Disciples

- 13. Introduction: *"The Plumb Line"*
- 14. The Master Builder: *"Who is God? Who are we?"*
- 15. The Master's Plan: *"God's Basic Plan of Salvation"*
- 16. The Support Beams: *"Basic Doctrine"*

PART I ADVANCE:

- 17. Building Spiritual Stamina: *"The Spiritual Disciplines"*
- 18. Styling It: *"From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street"*

PART II BASIC: Assisting in Spreading & Living out our Responsibility as Disciples

- 19. The Big House: *"The Church- It's Nature, Mission and Power."*
- 20. Assessment Tools: *"Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase."*
- 21. Building Dynamics: *"Shepherding & Flock Dynamics"*

PART II ADVANCE:

- 22. Variances & Code: *"Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader"*
- 23. Driveways: *"The Wesleyan Way"*
- 24. THE WRAP: **Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman & Finishing Touches:**
"Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!"

PART II BASIC:

Assisting in Spreading & Living out our Responsibility as Disciples

7. PART II BASIC- The Big House: “The Church- It’s Nature, Mission and Power.”

(REVIEW)

a. Small Group Breakout Questions:

i. If a Child were to ask you the question “What is Church?” how would or have you answered the question?

ii. What is “The Church” to you?

iii. What do you think God’s Plan for “The Church” is?

iv. As a group, can you write a clear and concise definition of the Church that you believe honor’s God’s plan for the Body of Christ?

b. Large Group Review of Small Group Breakout:

c. Introduction: The Big House- God’s House is God’s Mechanism for assisting us in Spreading the Gospel.

d. From our Study of Doctrine in section 5- The Support Beams we stated:

_____ - The Church is composed of all such persons (*Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers*) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

e. Community of Faith Constitution- Article IV

The Church

The Church is composed of all such persons (Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

- Article IV Statement of Faith, Summary of Core Beliefs, COF Constitution, page 3

“The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is vested all the power for its government. According to His commandments, Christians are to associate themselves into particular communities of local churches. God admonishes His people to assemble regularly for worship. God still heals, delivers and works miracles through His Church.”

- Article IV Statement of Faith, Additional Theological & Biblical Reference to our Core Beliefs, Item 9. COF Constitution, page 4

f. WALKING OUT THE DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH:

(1) It is _____ Gathered. (2) Believers in _____, who is the Head of the Body, the Bridegroom, (3) who has instructed us to continue His work in _____ until His return for the Bride- His Church!

g. Rick Warren's Definition of the Church-

“ _____ ” It's about the 1 that is not yet in the Body and not the 99 that are present in the Body!

Matthew 18:12-14 nkjv

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? ¹³**And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.** ¹⁴**Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.**

h. Defining the Church by _____: The Mission of the Church.

Matthew 28:18-20 nlt

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

i. Troy's Definition: WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

It is a TEAM, **A Community of Faith**, who is **growing faithful follower of Christ**. These followers are commissioned by Christ to be His witnesses, His body, His team on earth in order to fulfill the Great Commission. When two or more gather in the name of Christ- the church is in session!

j. Church-_____ ἐκκλησία [ekklesia /ek·klay·see·ah/]

Translates as “church” or “assembly.” (1) in a Christian sense an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting, a company of Christian, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order’s sake.

- It can refer to those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body.
- or to the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth including those faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven.³

k. The Order of the Church: Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church- The Body!

Colossians 1:15-19 nkjv

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸**And He is the head of the body, the church,** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

³ A Redacted version of Strong, J. 1996. *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship: Ontario

I. **The Unadulterated Church or what I want to call**
“_____”: (See Acts chapters 2-10)

Acts 2:38-47 nlt

Peter replied, “Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles*—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” ⁴⁰Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this generation that has gone astray!”

⁴¹**Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all.** ⁴²They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord’s Supper and in prayer.

⁴³A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. ⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—⁴⁷all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

1. The Prototype shows the formation of the original church: (Acts2:42-47)

- They devoted themselves to the _____ . (v.42)
- They shared in the _____ .(v.42)
- They _____ together. (v.42)
- A Deep sense of awe overcame them. (v.43)
- _____ & _____ were done in their presence by the Apostles. (v.43)
- The believers met together _____ and _____ . (v.44)
- They sold their stuff & shared with _____.(v.45)
- They worshiped together each _____.(v.46)
- They met in _____ . (v.46)
- And while doing it they all “ _____ ” and Enjoyed “ _____ ” among all the people. (v.47)
- And each day “ _____ ” To the Church-people who were “ _____ .” (v.47)

2. LET'S LOOK AT THE WHOLE ACTS PICTURE:

In Acts 2:1: We see 120 people filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. By the end of that day some 3000 people had given their life to Christ and were filled with the Power of God.

And it was just beginning. In the next day's many, many more are converted.

The Gospel starts burning in CHAPTERS 1-7 of Acts and quickly begins to move throughout Judea and into Samaria by Acts 8-9 and by Acts 10 it is burning through the world moving from the Hebrews to the Gentiles and from Jerusalem all the way to ROME!

In Acts 3: Peter and the Disciples begin Preaching and sharing the Gospel. Peter & John heal the crippled beggar.

In Acts 4: They were arrested and forbidden from proclaiming the name of Jesus in Acts 4:13-22, but they refuse to bow, and the people are rallying to their support for the Lame Man had been known by the crowd for 40 years. They gave all credit & glory to THE LORD!

The believers are filled with more boldness and begin to share their possessions and preach with more boldness. THE NUMBERS ARE GROWING DAILY.

In Acts 5: The High Priest and establishment imprison, threatens, and flogs the disciples and instead of being dejected they left blessed to be worthy of such flogging.

In Acts 6: They are having growing pains, so they broke the work down assigning 7 Deacons to supervise the care of the church, and the Apostles continued teaching and preaching the Word. The early church had all kinds of growth issues—Great Problems to Have!

In Acts 7: In a move of desperation, a Pharisee named Saul attempts to squelch the movement by Killing one of the deacons STEVEN. He is killed, but the actions don't squelch instead it spreads. The action sends the disciples off into Judea, Samaria and beyond. It doesn't squelch the rebellion, it starts HOME GROUPS, HOME CHURCHES EVERYWHERE. And that which was meant to defeat-catalyzed its growth.

In Acts 8: THE CHURCH HAD A MIGHTY VICTORY:

Acts 8:1-4 nkjv

Saul was one of the official witnesses at the killing of Stephen.

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem, and all the believers except the apostles fled into Judea and Samaria. ²(Some godly men came and buried Stephen with loud weeping.) ³Saul was going everywhere to devastate the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into jail.

⁴But the believers who had fled Jerusalem went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus.

In Acts 9: Saul is converted and becomes THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES, and then the rest is History.

Our very Church today is a by-product of the Prototype Church: *“We are a product of that first Revival!”* The question to us today is *“Will the revival continue?”*

3. WHAT THEY DID & HOW IT HAPPENED? WE LEARNED THEY: (Share the essence of the Acts church in the text Acts 1-9)

1. A _____ WITH JESUS.
2. THEY HAD A _____ FOR HIS NAME.
3. THEY CARRIED THE _____ WITH THEM.
4. THEY PRESSED ON OUT OF A GREATER FEAR OF _____ THAN OF THE SECULAR WORLD.
5. THEIR WILL AND DESIRE TO _____ IS WHAT MADE THEM CHAMPIONS FOR THE LORD.
6. AND IT WAS THEIR _____ THAT ADDED THOUSANDS TO THEIR CHURCH DAILY AND SPUN OFF HOUSE CHURCHES ACROSS THE WORLD AND TO THIS VERY DAY!

m. **In Summary:** The Body of the Church is the Body of Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers, those that have accepted the Gospel and are assisting the Gospel! As a Body we share in Team-led ministry. As a Body discipleship takes place within small groups as Jesus Himself focused His teaching discipleship ministry in a small group structure of 12.

n. A _____ Still in the making:

Matthew 16:18 nlt

¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers *(nkjv-the gates)* of hell will not conquer *(nkjv-prevail against)* it.

o. **Closing Prayer.**

NEXT WEEK

Assessment Tools: *“Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase.”*

8. PART II **BASIC**- Assessment Tools: “Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase.”

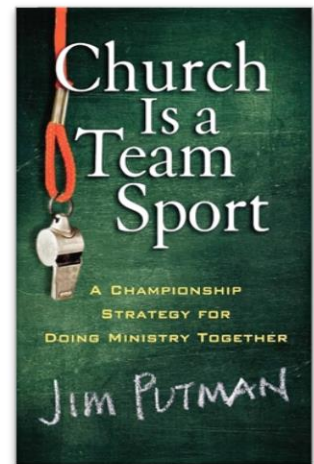
(REVIEW)

Small Group Breakout Questions:

CASE STUDY: “The Peril of a Geometry Student!”

“Imagine that you had a child whom you loved more than life. Like all parents, you wanted this child to grow to be a positive influence on the human race. Let’s say that your child has to pass geometry with at least a C to get into college. If he doesn’t get a degree from a college, he cannot get a job, and without a job, he cannot support a family. In the high school that your child attends, they have chosen to teach geometry in a classroom that holds five hundred kids. The teacher stands in front of the crowd and does geometry problems on the board. The teacher tries her best to explain how to answer the problems for forty-minutes one-time a week and then dismisses the class. She does not have time to meet in private tutoring sessions and she does not have a method to help students who are struggling. She tells you when you question her that the students have the book—they should just read it.” (Case Study taken

from *Church as a Team Sport*, pg. 131-132)



- i. **How would you feel about the school your child goes to? How important or costly could the grade of this student be?**
- ii. **What would you do in regard to this situation if you were the parent and this was happening to your Child? In short, how would you handle this situation?**
- iii. **Imagine your group was a focus group asked to solve this problem for your school, what might your groups recommendation look like?**

a. Large Group Review of Small Group Breakout:

ANOTHER LOOK AT OUR SCENARIO FROM A LITTLE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE:

When you look at our CASE STUDY- any loving and caring parent would be torque at the least! And I can tell you Beth and I would not stand for it; we would find a solution. And how many of you would agree with that?

Why do we react so adversely to something like this but then we allow the same type of thing to happen in our churches every week?

The people in our pews are struggling with the most important subject there is- _____. *(As Pastors)*, We stand in front of *our congregations* for forty minutes a week and describe on the big screen what it takes to solve life's biggest problems. We don't have time to tutor them, and we don't raise people who do. Is it any wonder why our people can't answer the easiest of biblical questions *TODAY? Is it any wonder why the church of Jesus Christ is in such a devastating spiral downward?*

While children's grades and education are so, so important, let me be clear here!!!! How much more is riding on how well God's children understand the Scriptures and apply them to their lives? We must remember that God's Word is truth, and that the Gospel is the _____. It is also our guide to having a *truly satisfying and fulfilling* life. *The Gospel* can only be passed on through a relational discipleship process. God's plan includes those who would guide people to maturity. *And the fact is that faith cannot be matured or grown* in a forty-minute lecture once a week any more than geometry can be taught to a large group in forty minutes per week. Why do we accept *a practice* in our churches *that* we would never accept in a classroom with our own kids? “(pg. 142-143, Italics are my added emphasis)”

b. What is a Disciple? They are _____.

One of our basic clues to understanding “What is a disciple?” is found in Jesus’ calling of his first disciples in Matthew 4:18-20.

Matthew 4:18-20 says:

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into a lake, for they were fishermen.

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you **fishers of men.**” At once they left their nets and **followed him.**”

So, four things define a disciple:

- 1. First, a disciple is one who has made _____.** Jesus said, “Come and follow me.” He is the leader. We must be committed to being the followers.
- 2. Second, a disciple is one who has entered a process of _____ with other maturing Christians.**
- 3. Third, a disciple is one who is _____.**
- 4. Finally, a disciple is one who is committed to the _____.**

c. Jesus the Master of Discipleship:

- 1. He taught in a _____.** Jesus worked with 12 disciples in a small group format because He understood that was the best way to transfer experiential learning. Don’t you think it there was a better way to make disciples Jesus would have shown and emulated it for us.

2. Then He modeled it in the _____.

Christ did more than hold classes and speak words, He took His disciples into the real-life laboratory of Israel and modeled for them the behaviors he spoke about. In other words *“He modeled for them the behaviors He wanted to see in them. When dealing with our children, we often hear that character is caught, not taught.”* (pg. 134)

“Jesus is the best example of what it means to be a great coach. He gave us a picture of real discipleship that works. Unlike many pastors today, Jesus knew that you cannot disciple in mass numbers. Yes, He spoke to the crowds, but He took His disciples aside and taught them in a relational way. Discipleship is a process that can only be accomplished through relationship. Jesus was the master of effective education. He taught in a small group.” *(Church as a Team Sport, Pg. 131)*

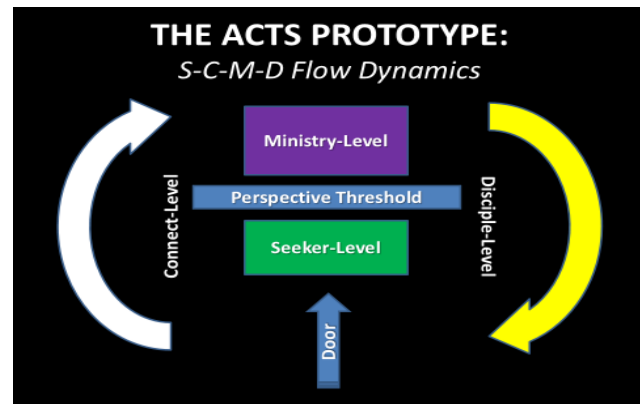
d. Four phases or stages of the Discipleship Process: (You cannot get to one phase without the previous.)

- a. _____ **Phase-** **“Seeker-level** people are those who have either not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior or have accepted Him but have not been connected to other believers.” (pg. 144) **I have modified Putman’s Share-level to be Seeker-Level to fit my terminology.*

- b. _____ **Phase-** **“Connect-level** people are growing in their knowledge of the Word... Connect-level disciples are going to church, taking some Bible classes, and reading books that will bolster their understanding of what it means to be a Christian.”(pg. 144)

c. _____ **Phase-** In the **ministry-level** people “will start to see things as God sees them, because they are connected to Him... They become other-centered people, servants, a natural result of walking with the Lord... When they walk into a room, rather than thinking, Who will talk to me? Who is going to notice me? They are being transformed into people who think, Who needs help? He looks lonely.” (pg. 144-145)

d. _____ **Phase-** In the **Discipleship-level** people are “the disciples learn not only to minister to those around them but to train others to do the same thing.” (pg. 145)



e. **Putman’s Model of Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phase:**

a. **Introduction:** Real Life Ministries with Pastor Jim Putman came up with a way to help leaders better understand where people are in their faith journey. They termed it “*Phrase from the Phase.*” In short people say things that give us good indicators of where they are in their spiritual journey, and through understanding their phrase we can help people move along their journey to becoming Discipleship-Phase leaders.

b. Putman says, “Some are not Christians, but God is drawing them. *(In Wesleyan terms they are in the Prevenient Grace Stage.)* Some gave their lives to Jesus at some point but have never been disciples, so they are very immature in their faith. Others are Christians who are struggling and need encouragement; still others are Christians who need to learn a lesson. The key is to determine who needs what.” *(pg. 146 italics my addition or emphasis)*

f. Seeker-Level people: There are 2 varieties. (146-148)

a. - Need to hear the Gospel. They need to have people walk them through God’s plan of Salvation. They need answers to questions and may need Biblical Apologetics for faith so they can find out what it means to be a Christian.

In each of these cases, we can know that they have never accepted the Gospel Message that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of their lives because “*Unsaved Seeker-level people*” use phrases like:

- *“I don’t believe in the Bible,”*
- *“I believe Jesus is a way to get to heaven, but He is not the only way”,*
- *“I went to church when I was young, but Christians were mean to my family, so we never went back.”*
- *“What do I need to be saved for? I am as good as anyone else.”*
- *“Why does God allow bad things to happen?”*

- b. - Need to begin to develop basic knowledge and the new believer habits of prayer, study, fellowship, and witness. They need someone to begin to show them how to understand God's will for them as Christian's.

Saved Seeker-level people who have accepted Jesus as Savior, as the Son of God, but may not understand yet their relationship to other believers and the Church of Jesus Christ use phrases like:

- *"I love Jesus, but my church is in the mountains [meadows, nature] because I feel close to God there,"*
- *"I have been hurt too many times by believers to let them get too close to me,"*
- *"My accountability is God."*
- OR ONE I HEAR SO OFTEN: *"I am too busy at work to get connected."*

- g. Connect-Level People: (149)** This stage represents the current stage of the largest amount of believers in the four-stage process.

Connect-level people are found in groups led by Discipleship-level persons. *"If the group is functioning correctly, these groups act like little churches. People learn from one another and love each other while helping to take care of the needs in the group."* (148-149)

People at this level are there because *"they want to be a part of something or because they are still working from a works-salvation mind-set."* (149) They are serving typically from with "me" perspectives and motives. At this level they

are working through how they will be involved and how the gospel includes them. This is a normal stage in our discipleship process but not the Lord's end goal.

Remember the disciples argued over who would be the greatest and who would sit at Jesus' right hand in the Kingdom. (*Matthew 20:20-28 & Luke 22:24-30*)

This is a far cry from the final worries these same later Spirit-filled Disciples or Disciple-phase followers of Jesus would encounter later. As you can see from Acts 4 & 5, they are not even thinking about who sits where, just how great it is to be found worthy to suffer like their Jesus. (*Acts 4:13-22 & Acts 5:22-40*)

Connect-Level People are very self-orientated in their perspective and are permeated with a "me" mentality.

There phrases will repeatedly use the pronoun "I":

- *"I love my group"*
- *"I have never felt so loved."*
- *"I have finally found home."*

Everyone has to go through this Connect-phase, but those that are clinging to it as the honeymoon wears off will begin to become "I" critical. If not careful, and if they don't continue to grow in their faith, they can become very high maintenance and costly to good Biblical growth cycles. Some phrases that indicate that "I" critical level can be:

- *"The leaders better not try to split my group— I was just starting to get comfortable here."*
- *"I had to walk a hundred yards to get into church last Sunday. It made me so mad."*

- *“I was working in the nursery (or just fill in the _____), but they don’t appreciate me there, so I think I am going to quit.”*
- *“I am not comfortable at that church. There are far too many people?”*

h. Ministry-Level People: At the Ministry level the huge threshold is crossed from being centered on Me”, “My” & “I” to being centered on “OTHERS.”

Ministry-level people focus primarily on giving God the Glory with their actions. At this level serving is the very heart of their witness. And motivation is sparked out of graciousness for what the Lord has done for them and can do for “others.” At this level there is a desire and drive to go deeper in the Word, to be better equipped to do ministry and to apprentice under Disciple-level leaders. Finally, instead of seeing the church as a means to serve them, they see their gifts, talents and faith as a tool to serve the Lord and His Body. Ministry-level people are becoming “OTHER” centered in their language. When someone new comes in they are the ones that go over to the table and sit down with them or invite them to the group. They don’t talk about themselves in their groups, they are talking about others! They are becoming givers rather than takers. This does not mean they don’t get their feelings hurt, they are human after all, but they don’t let their “me” thinking dominate their walk, they have truly died to Christ. *(This is evidence of what John Wesley called Sanctifying Grace.)* Some phrases they use are:

- *“ _____ was not here tonight in our Bible Study.”*
- *“Does anyone know why _____ was not in church this morning?”*
- *“I was watching _____ the other day and she seems kind of down. Maybe I will make her a cherry pie, she loves them and drop it by.”*

i. Disciple-Level People: When Ministry-level do more than just desire to care for a need but begin to think about how they can get others involved in caring they are moving into the Disciples-phase.

We see the Apostle Paul doing this in his letters to Timothy and Titus. He spoke to saying simply “Do what you have seen me do!” Paul who was trained by Barnabas, is now training others to be like Him. At this level you move from being in the group or apprenticing in the group to being able to lead a group to being one who disciples others.

People who are moving from the ministry phase to this new Disciple-level ministry will use phrases like:

- *“Who can I get to help me reach more people in this ministry?”*
- *“Have you noticed _____? He is really talented and loves the Lord and is great with those kids; he should be using those gifts to serve God.”*
- *“I was going to the Hospital tonight to pray for a couple of people, and I am thinking about taking George with me. He is so compassionate and loves to pray, and if he goes with me, I know he would enjoy it!”*

Discipleship-level persons have a passion to share their joy of serving with others by giving them the opportunity to experience God in this same way.

Putman tells us that Discipleship-level people: (153-154)

1. _____ to grow a ministry they are _____ about.
2. They notice that the ministry could _____ if they had help.
3. They notice the gifts and passions of _____ who could play a part in the ministry.
4. They are willing to _____ who they see who needs to be trained.

j. OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE:

Jesus' clear hope was the _____ would grow to become like Him in calling people to a _____ & _____ faith in God and in turn _____ to go forth and continue the work of spreading the Gospel as a part of His Great Commission until Jesus returns.

k. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK

Building Dynamics: "Shepherding & Flock Dynamics"

9. PART II **BASIC**- Building Dynamics: “*Shepherding & Flock Dynamics.*”

(REVIEW)

Small Group: Opening Text John 10:1-16

John 10:1-16 nlt *I Am the Good Shepherd*

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he **calls** his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

⁷Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I **know** My *sheep*, and am **known** by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; ⁱand I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

ⁱ Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; [John 15:13; 19:30]; 1 John 3:16

- 1. How do you define the role of a real down to earth Shepherd of Sheep?**

- 2. In the Bible, the Shepherd of the Sheep is paralleled to the work of leading Disciples. In our text, Jesus is “The Good Shepherd”, our example of excellence. What are 3-5 key roles that the “Good Shepherd” plays in the life of the Sheep/Disciples?**
 - i.**
 - ii.**
 - iii.**
 - iv.**
 - v.**

- 3. As Christ followers we are to become DISCIPLE MAKERS or “under-shepherds.” What are the key responsibilities that a shepherd of one of the Lord’s flocks within a local church should be concerned about in being like the “Good Shepherd”?**

a. Large Group Review of Small Group Breakout:

b. Shepherding & Flock Dynamics:

a. _____ takes place in the larger community at the _____ Level for us this is the Local Church. *(There is a catalyst that occurs in the corporate worship experience. It is in this experience that the Holy Spirit anoints and inhabits the preaching moment for its maximum impact.)*

b. _____ takes place at the _____ level and for us this is within the Local Church. *(There is another experience of corporate learning that takes place in the dynamic experience of a teaching moment to groups of hungry disciples.)*

c. _____/_____ is the discipleship that takes place at the _____ level within the Local Church. *(The very heartbeat of the church comes in the small group. It is in the flock where people come together, they are called, they are known & know, and support one-another through the Share-Connect-Ministry-Disciple phases of their walk with God.)*

c. The Key Responsibilities of the Shepherd:

a. _____ - This is the initiation and inviting role.

b. _____ - This is the effective hosting role which includes such things as i.e. Planning, Communicating Hosting, Accountability and Follow-up.

- c. _____ - This in the tending and mending role of the shepherd which includes supporting the sheep in times of Crisis, Sickness, Happiness, and Transition. This responsibility calls for discernment, assessment, and referral skills.
- d. _____ - This is the Rabbinic role of helping to open the scriptures, doctrines, heritage, and teachings of the Christian Way to the flock.
- e. _____ - This is the Commission of the Church to prepare the flock to go forth and multiply through their witness and by inviting others to begin the discipleship journey. *(Shepherds don't have Sheep, Sheep have other Sheep, but Shepherds help them to be fat, healthy, and productive sheep.)*
- f. _____ - This is the work done by a "Good" Shepherd on their knees to cover their flock and to intercede for them as they live out their faith daily.

d. The Dynamics of a Healthy Shepherding System is like that of a Healthy Water System. In the water world there are.

- a. **Cisterns:** Man-made and Land-made areas that can hold water reserves. Healthy Cisterns require use and fresh supply. While unhealthy and cracked cisterns are stagnant and can contaminate and even worse destroy life.

- b. _____: Some sources of water are literally Dead or Dying Seas. In these cases, the water input is dramatically below demand. In some cases, there is no demand, just shrinkage. And some of these seas are in areas where the climate exacerbates the matter and is actually increasing the water loss. As a result, water quality is increasingly changing; concentration levels are even becoming lethal and even toxic.
- c. _____: Is a healthy water supply that has water coming in and water going out. If no water continuously comes in, then the lake dries up. If a lake has water coming in but no water going out, then the lake floods and kills everything around it. But a healthy living water source has balance.

e. The Words of the Prophet Jeremiah should guide us:

Jeremiah 2:13 nlt

For my people have done two evil things: They have forsaken me—the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!

If we step back from the source? The Church will have no fresh-living water coming in, and in due season we will begin to dry up. Sometime in a survivalist mentality churches will attempt to hoard and ration the remaining water, not offering it for ministry but holding it in tanks for their own use to survive a little longer. But look what happens, the reserved water becomes stagnant like the water in an old

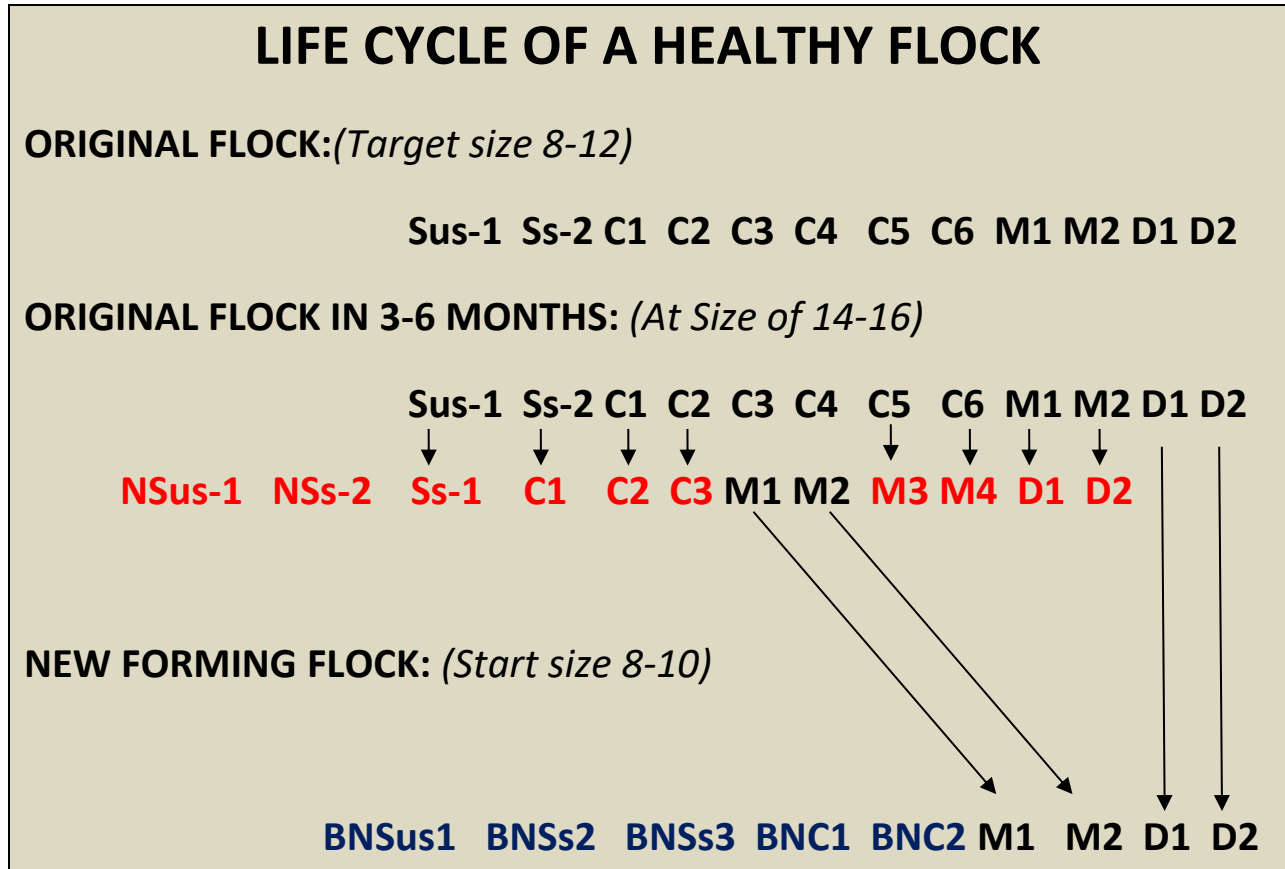
fish tank, and it becomes lethally deadly in due season! Why because the Church of Jesus Christ was designed not to function as a Cistern but as the source of “Living Water” that the World might know JESUS.

Which source would you choose to drink from?

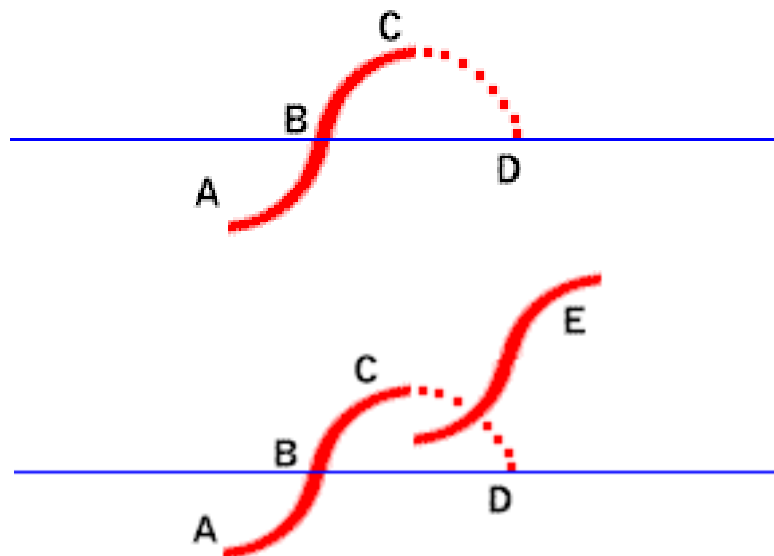


- f. Group Conversation describing what a Cistern, Dead Sea and Living Water Church might look like!**
- g. The Healthy and Normal Life Cycle of a Flock.** Again, if the Flock is healthy, there will be a healthy Herd. And Healthy herds make for a Ranch that is productive and flourishing.

Let's Look at the Life Cycle of a Healthy Flock.



h. **Dynamic Death and Dynamic Growth illustrated by the Bell Curve and the S-Curve Solution:** *(The law of diminishing returns verses the law of momentum.)*



i. Pastor Troy's Haircut Metaphor:



Pastor Troy's Solution to Great Hair: *"If you want to have twice as many great hair days cut your hair on a **S-Curve** and not on the **Bell-Curve** timeline."*

j. In Summary the same is true for Shepherding Sheep and Growing Churches:

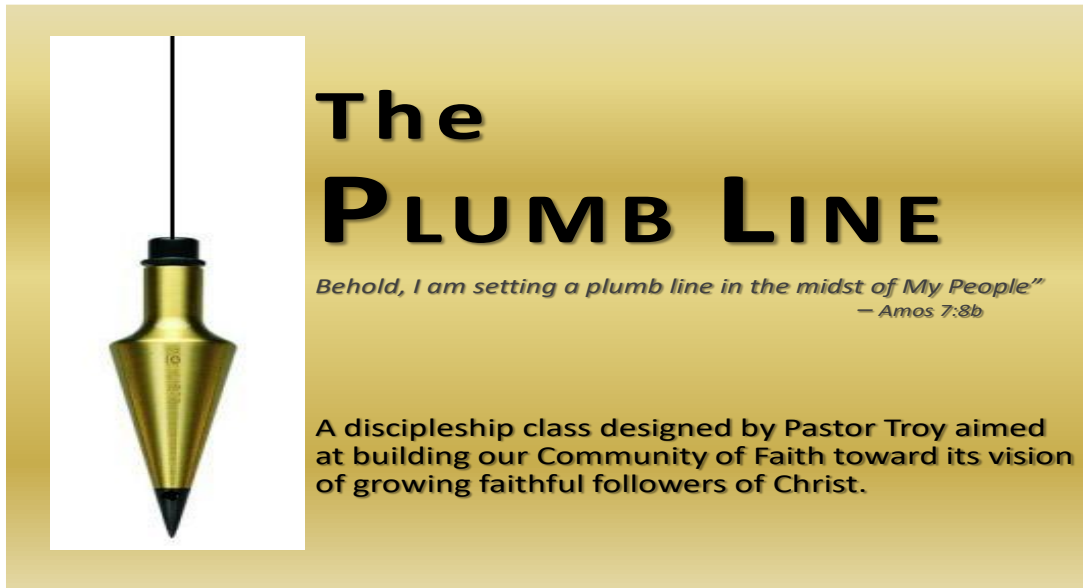
A Healthy Flock has new sheep, adolescent sheep and mature sheep under all under the leadership of under-Shepherds. As a result, new flocks are birthed forth. And a Health and Productive system means the Ranch is growing. ***(Ranching on the S-Curve)***

If we fail to grow and produce healthy flocks than they become stagnant and aging leading to decline and death. ***(Ranching on the Bell-Curve)***

k. Closing Prayer

NEXT WEEK

PART 1 ADVANCE- Variances & Code: *"Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader."*



Student Booklet- with Blanks

THE PLUMB LINE- Class Outline

PART I BASIC: Accepting our Responsibility as Disciples

1. **Introduction:** *"The Plumb Line"*
2. **The Master Builder:** *"Who is God? Who are we?"*
3. **The Master's Plan:** *"God's Basic Plan of Salvation"*
4. **The Support Beams:** *"Basic Doctrine"*

PART I ADVANCE:

5. **Building Spiritual Stamina:** *"The Spiritual Disciplines"*
6. **Styling It:** *"From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street"*

PART II BASIC: Assisting in Spreading & Living out our Responsibility as Disciples

7. **The Big House:** *"The Church- It's Nature, Mission and Power."*
8. **Assessment Tools:** *"Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase."*
9. **Building Dynamics:** *"Shepherding & Flock Dynamics"*

PART II ADVANCE:

10. **Variances & Code:** *"Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader"*
11. **Driveways:** *"The Wesleyan Way"*
12. **THE WRAP: Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman & Finishing Touches:**
"Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!"

10. **PART II ADVANCE- Variances & Code:** “Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader”

(REVIEW)

a. **Small Group Bible Study on the Spiritual Gifts:** *(FIND THE GIFTS- There are 23 different gifts, some listed more than once, do not list a gift more than once)*

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 nkjv (9)
for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

- GIFTS MENTIONED**
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____

1 Corinthians 12:28 nkjv (4)
And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____

Romans 12:6-8 nkjv (4)

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry (service or helps), *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

14. _____ /

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

Ephesians 4:11-13 nkjv (2)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors (shepherds) and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

18. _____

19. _____

1 Peter 4:9-10 nkjv (1)

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Exodus 31:3 nkjv (1)

And I have filled him (Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship/Craftsmanship.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 nkjv (1)

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

Psalms 150:3-5 nkjv (1)

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! ⁴Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! ⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

Others not included:

- Missionary
- ?????

b. Large Group Review of Small Group Breakout:

c. The Spiritual Health of the Leader:

The Leader's Spiritual Health comes by working through the four stages or phases of discipleship:

- i. Seeker-phase**
- ii. Connect-phase**
- iii. Ministry-phase**
- iv. Disciple-phase**

A Leader must foster a healthy spiritual walk which includes their commitment to the Lord's work with their-- Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service & Witness.

A Leader must be both a Disciple and Steward of God's Gifts with a walk that is striving to live up to God's expectation for spiritual leaders. Paul writes about this in his letter to Titus, one of his spiritual leaders in training.

Titus 1:6-9 nlt

An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. ⁷An elder must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. ⁸He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. ⁹He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

You might be thinking I am missing a few of the key points above; I have fallen short of Paul's expectation. I am done for! Not so fast, make sure you understand how God works:

Proverbs 24:16 nlt

The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again.
But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked.

Peter failed the Lord but was restored because of his _____ and _____ to move forward in feeding the sheep of God. You may have fallen short as a _____ but a change of _____ and a change of _____ can put you back on God's path.

Here is a fact of faith from Pastor Troy:

God's grace is sufficient when your heart is repentant!

Finally, I believe the key to the Spiritual Health of the Leader is operating in the area of your giftedness. When you operate in the area of your giftedness your _____ are tapped, your interests are _____ & _____ and your _____ is released.

d. Three indicators help you maintain your OPTIMUM SPIRITUAL HEALTH AS A LEADER: **Taken from Networking by Bill Hybels.*

What are the three pieces that help you hit the mark? They are your: *(See Appendices 1)*

1. _____ - Indicates _____ you will be best suited to serve.

Passion is the God-given desire that compels us to make a difference in a particular ministry.

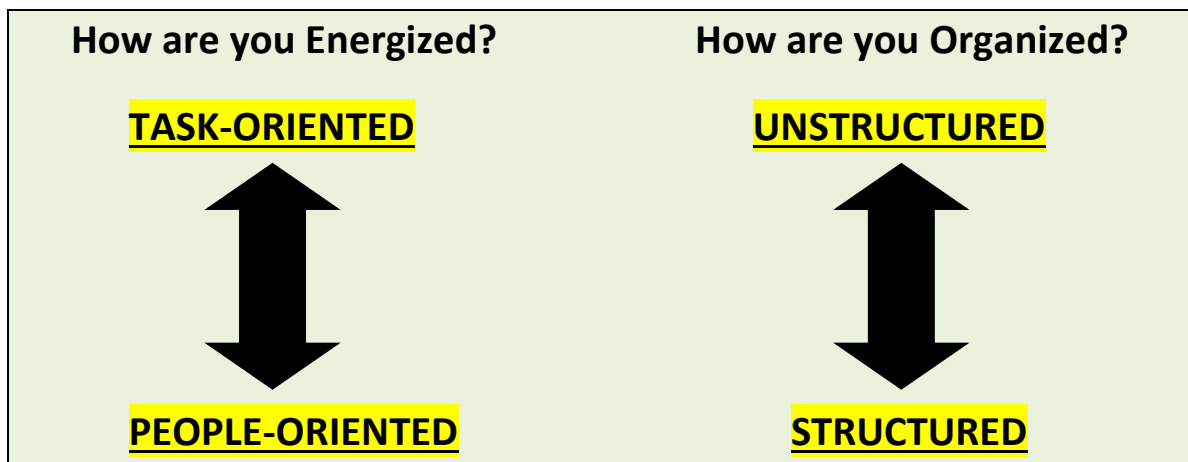
2. _____ - Indicate _____ you will do when you serve God. *(See Appendices 2 & Hand-out)*

Spiritual Gifts are divine endowments, special abilities, that God has given us to make our unique contribution in the world.

- *They are distributed by the Holy Spirit and are given by God to every believer according to God's purpose, plan, and grace for that believer for the Common Good of the Body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:11)*
- *Every believer has at least _____ and is responsible to be a _____. (1 Peter 4:10)*
- *Every believer's gifts should only be used to _____ other believers and _____ God! (1 Cor. 12:7)*

3. _____ - Indicates _____ you will serve. **(See Appendices 3)**

There are two spectrums to look at in determining your personal style in serving the Lord. There is the _____ & the _____.



e. In all three of these pieces, we cannot go wrong for our Passion, Spiritual Gifts and Personal Style are:

- i. They are _____.
- ii. There is _____ or _____, just what is right for you.
- iii. And they simply help you to understand WHERE, WHAT & HOW you can be _____
_____.

f. These three areas, when they are put together, give us a good indicator of how to build our ministry walk to the CODE that God has placed within us. It is within this code that we will be the most fulfilled and satisfied in living our life PLUMB to God’s will for each of us.

OUR OPTIMUM SPIRITUAL HEALTH		
PASSION	SPIRITUAL GIFTS	PERSONAL STYLE
_____	_____	_____

g. Closing Prayer

NEXT WEEK

Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman:

“In the Footsteps of the Carpenter.”

APPENDICES #1: Passion assessment Questions:

Ask yourself these 6 questions:

1. If I could snap my fingers and know that I couldn't fail, what would I do?
2. At the end of my life, I'd love to be able to look back and know that I'd done something about?
3. If I were to mention your name to a group of your friends, what would they say you were really interested in or passionate about?
4. What conversation would keep you talking late into the night?
5. What I would most like to do for others?
6. I think the area where I could make the most significant contribution in the church is:

Based on the above questions finish this statement:

I sense I have a *Passion* for: _____

APPENDICES #2: SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

(SEE SPECIAL HAND-OUT)

APPENDICES #3: PERSONAL STYLE ASSESSMENT

**Taken from Networking*

How are you ENERGIZED? *(Use the numbers as a scale between the 2 options circle the most representative of your life.)*

1. I'm more comfortable| *doing things for people* 1 2 3 4 5 *being with people*
2. When doing a task I tend to| *focus on the goal* 1 2 3 4 5 *focus on relationships*
3. I get more excited about| *advancing a cause* 1 2 3 4 5 *creating community*
4. I feel I have accomplished something when I've| *gotten a job done* 1 2 3 4 5 *when everyone gets there*
5. It is more important to start a meeting| *on time* 1 2 3 4 5 *when everyone gets there*
6. I'm more concerned with| *meeting a deadline* 1 2 3 4 5 *maintaining the team*
7. I place a higher value on| *action* 1 2 3 4 5 *communication*

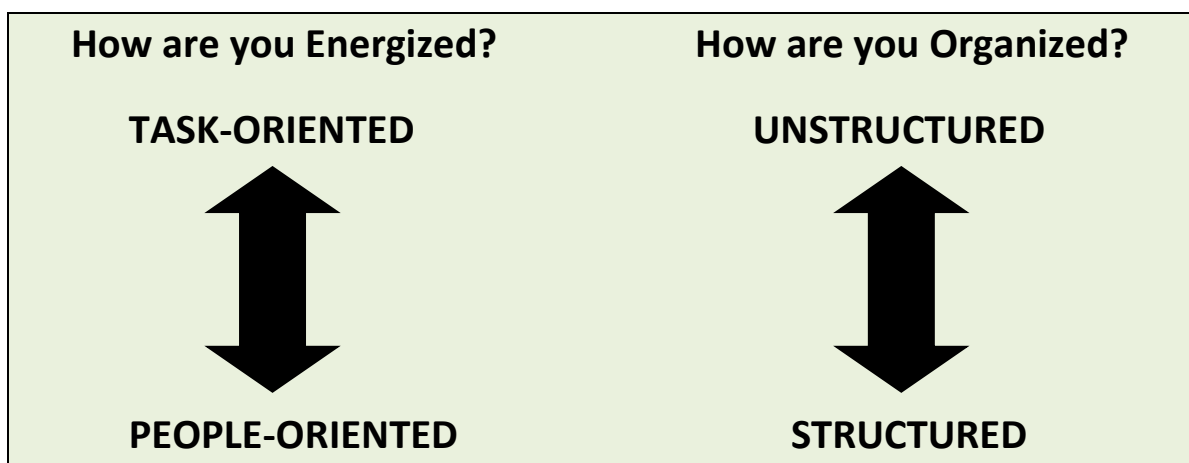
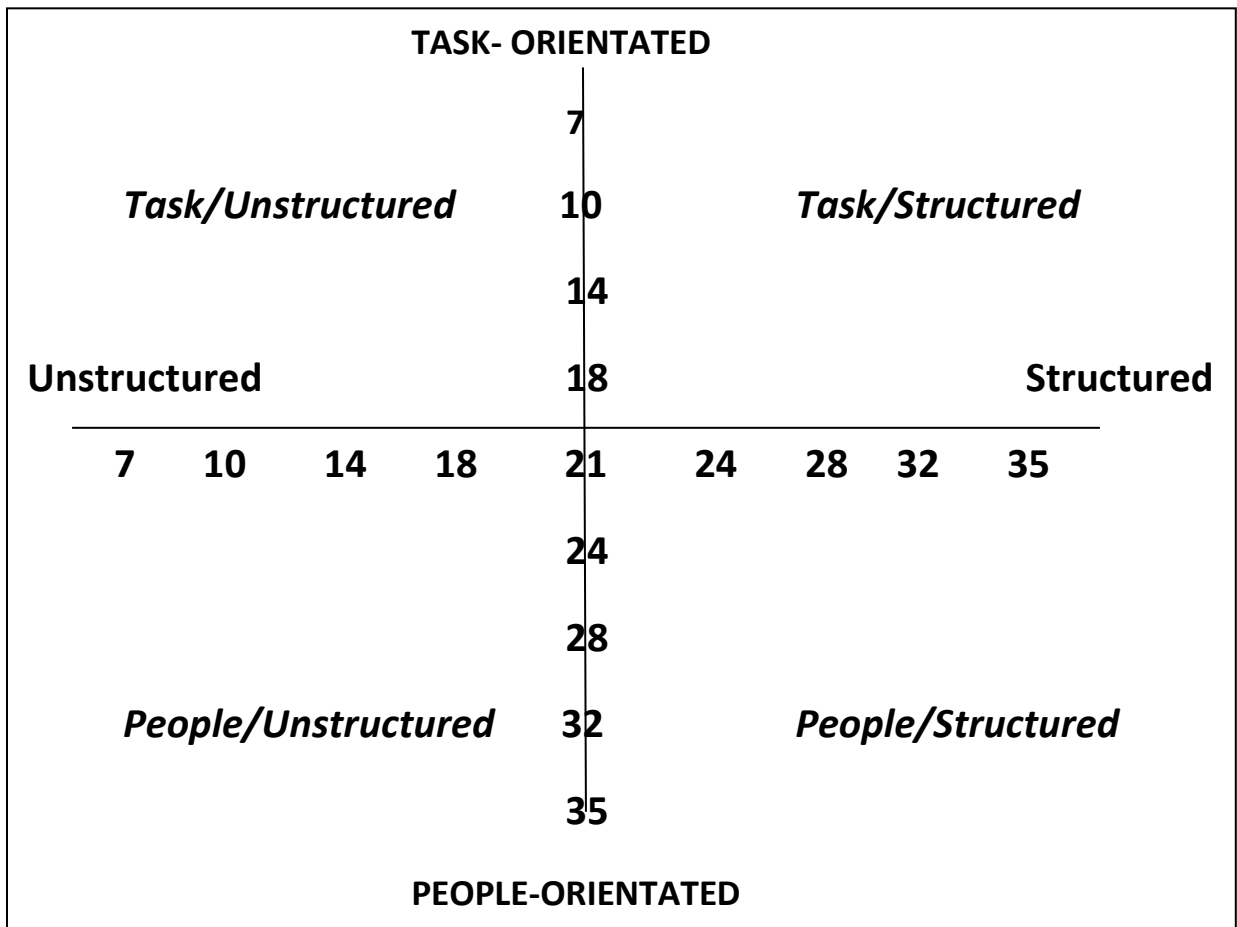
What is your energized score: _____ (min 7, max 35)

How are you ORGANIZED? *(Use the numbers as a scale between the 2 options circle the most representative of your life.)*

1. While on vacation I prefer to| *be spontaneous* 1 2 3 4 5 *follow a set plan*
2. I prefer to set guidelines that are| *general* 1 2 3 4 5 *specific*
3. I prefer to| *leave my options open* 1 2 3 4 5 *settle things now*
4. I prefer projects that have| *variety* 1 2 3 4 5 *routine*
5. I like to| *play it by ear* 1 2 3 4 5 *stick to a plan*
6. I find routine| *boring* 1 2 3 4 5 *restful*
7. I accomplish tasks best| *by working it out as I go* 1 2 3 4 5 *by following a plan*

What is your organized score: _____ (min 7, max 35)

Draw two horizontal lines on the appropriate axis through the number circled on your score. Your Personal Style is best indicated at the cross point of the two lines.



11. PART II **ADVANCE-** DRIVEWAYS: “*The Wesleyan Way*”

(REVIEW)

Section I:

"A Brief Review of Methodist History & Theology."

1. John Wesley (1703-1791)

Childhood: John Wesley was born in 1703 in Epworth, England. His father was an Anglican priest named Samuel. His mother, Susanna, was a strong, intelligent woman; she was raised in the puritan tradition and was a very spiritually fervent woman who raised their family in a tradition of Christian service and worship. At age 5, John narrowly escaped death in a house fire. His mother thereafter thought him especially set apart by God- "*a brand plucked from the burning.*" John was 1 of 19, over half died before reaching maturity.

Education: In 1714, at age 11, Wesley was sent away to school in London and later, at 17, to Christ Church College, Oxford. There he proved to be an excellent student, particularly gifted in languages and theology. When he was 23, he was appointed a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. In 1728, at age 25, Wesley was ordained a priest of the Church of England.

Methodism: Shortly after his ordination, John joined his younger brother Charles and other Oxford students who had formed a religious society, *The Holy Club*, dedicated to personal devotion and service to the poor. They tried to achieve order and method in their habit of prayer, discussion, and social ministry. Other students in jest called them the "*Bible Moths*" and the "*Methodists.*" Wesley and his followers adopted the latter name as a badge of honor.

Seeking Faith: Wesley did not yet feel that his disciplined life of holy actions would assure his salvation. He decided to preach the Gospel to the Indians, hoping to come to understand it better. He sailed to the colony of Georgia in 1735 and spent two disappointing years as a frontier missionary. Feeling he had lost his faith in God, Wesley returned to England. There he began to worship with a very devout German Christian Society (the Moravians).

Conversion: At a prayer meeting in London on May 24, 1738, Wesley had a climatic experience of Christ:

"I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Wesley went on to share this new love in his heart with the people throughout England. Wesley's England was in terrible need of Spiritual Renewal.

- 2. Wesley's Ministry:** He sought to provide an answer by providing an Evangelical Mission to the people. Wesley's message was, *"Salvation is for everyone and can be found through Jesus. A new life awaits anyone who loves Christ, repents of sins, believes in saving grace and follows His example."* Wesley preached in the church, byways, and highways of Europe, preaching outdoors and on stones outside of the mines as the workers would come from the mines. Wesley's heart was extra sensitive to those with no contact with the church. During his years of ministry, Wesley traveled some 250,000 miles on horseback giving more than 40,000 sermons. John's younger brother Charles was always a supporter and partner in his ministry and is responsible for writing over 4000 hymns, such as *"Hark the Herald Angels Sing."*

3. **Wesley's Social Gospel:** Wesley worked his whole life to renew the Church of England and extend its reach to the churchless masses. John Wesley preached social holiness. Methodists have long supported:
- **Education-** Many local Methodist Societies sponsored schools. Wesley himself ran a school for orphans at Kingswood. He also wrote many educational texts and revised others for general use. Duke, Emory, SMU, Vanderbilt, McKendree, Illinois Wesleyan, many, many colleges, seminaries, and medical schools are of Methodist origin.
 - **Abolition of Slavery-** Wesley staunchly opposed slavery calling it "the scandal of religion, of England and of human nature." He gave many sermons on its evils.
 - **Medical Assistance-** Wesley ran medical dispensaries for the poor in several English cities. He wrote and published a handbook for medical home care. Methodists operate hundreds of Hospitals, Nursing homes, Retirement villages and other institutions throughout the World.
4. **Methodism in AMERICA:** Around 1760 a movement lead by lay Methodist missionaries to the America began developing parishes around the Maryland and Virginia areas. As the American Methodist movement grew, and there were almost no Anglican priests available, the church cried for ordained clergy to carry out the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Methodist movement grew until the war for independence made it hard for Wesley, an English Tory, to maintain relations with his American Methodist cousins. Wesley sent Thomas Coke to America as a superintendent with orders to make Francis Asbury an additional superintendent to supervise the work of the Methodists in America. Both Asbury

and Coke, as ordained clergy, would supervise the sacraments. Wesley also sent a prayer book titled, "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America." his revision of the Church of England's 39 Articles of Religion. In 1784, at the famous Christmas Conference of Methodist preachers held in Baltimore at Lovely Lane Chapel, the American Methodist movement organized officially as the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. In some way or another that original church has continued to this day. For over 30 years Coke and Asbury served as the bishops. The first American born Bishop was Bishop William McKendree.

Section II. Major Points of Wesleyan Doctrine

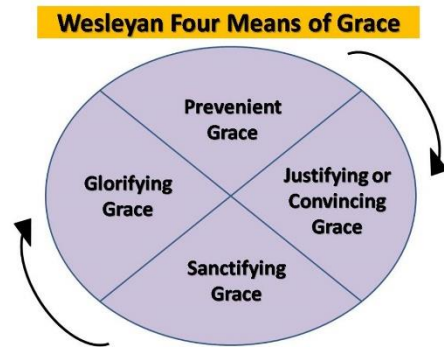
1. As people of the Methodist Way, we share in the **Apostolic witness** to Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord.
2. As people of the Methodist Way, we accept as part of our identity:
 - 1) The **Cannon of Scripture** found in the **39** Books of the OT and **27** Books of the NT.
 - 2) Ecumenical Creeds from Nicaea as well as **The Apostles' Creed**. *(These Creeds have set the boundaries for acceptable Christian Doctrine.)*
 - 3) As people of the Methodist Way, we became a part of **the Protestant Reformation** of the 16th & 17th Century. This movement *"sought to reclaim authentic biblical witness. These documents affirm the primacy of scripture and provided format for doctrinal standards through their statements of essential beliefs on matters such as the way of Salvation, the Christians life, and the nature of the Church."* (pg. 42, Para 101, 2004 UM Discipline)

- 4) As people of the Methodist Way, we spring from the loins of **The Church of England** and share in their doctrinal heritage.
- 5) The Methodist movement began as a **renewal movement** within the Church of England. The movement sought a return to Christian Holiness by living out in a practical way, *“The Scriptural Way of Salvation.”* (pg. 45)
- 6) The Wesleyan Way has a clear **"Ordo of Salutis"** or **"Order of Salvation"**: It follows that God's grace and love is always with us. While the grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as *"Prevenient grace,"* continues in *"Justifying grace,"* and is brought to fruition in *"Sanctifying grace"* and achieves its perfection in *"Glorifying grace."* The definitions of Wesley's four means of Grace make it clear that as Wesleyan's, we believe that the Grace of God is ever present with us:

By GRACE we mean *“the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit.”* (pg. 45)

- i. **Prevenient Grace-** *“The First Slight Transient Conviction.”*
- ii. **Justifying or Convincing Grace-** The point where we confess our sins, accept God's pardoning love. *“We become Children of God.”*
- iii. **Sanctifying Grace-** is about seeking Christian Perfection. It is the Grace of God in seeking to have one's own heart per Wesley to be *“habitually filled with the Love of God and neighbor”* and as *“having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked.”* (pg. 47)

iv. **Glorifying Grace**- The Grace that leads us home into the Presence of the Almighty, transforming us into God’s perfect will for our lives. This grace most often comes to us in death, but Wesley considered this a state of entire sanctification.



7) **Faith & Good Works**- Wesley believed *“repentance should be accompanied by ‘Fruit meet for repentance,’ of works of piety and mercy.”* (pg. 47)

8) **Mission & Service**- *“Personal Salvation always involves Christian mission & service to the world.”* Our faith cannot be real unless it is holiness in action through our worship inside the walls and our service outside the walls. Wesley called this *“Social Holiness.”* (pg. 48)

9) **The Early Methodist Societies had a very simple term for membership:** *“a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins.”* (pg. 48)

10) Wesley felt evangelical living should be lived out to three simple rules. Wesley wrote:

i. **FIRST:** *“By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind.”*

ii. **SECOND:** *“By doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all.”*

iii. **THIRD:** *“By attending upon all the ordinances of God”*- In short – Stay in Love with God!

11) The Wesleyan Way calls for us to better understand the Bible and our Church using what is known as **"The Wesleyan Quadrilateral."** It breaks down to:

1. **Scripture**

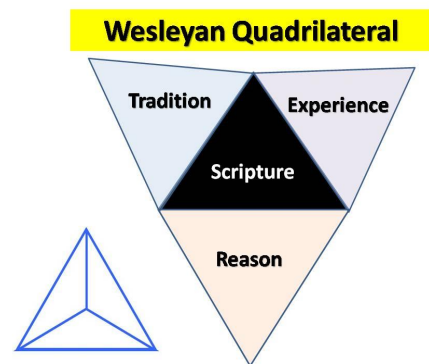
2. **Tradition**

3. **Reason**

4. **Experience**

- i. The Wesleyan Way holds that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice but that the Bible is primary among them.
- ii. Scripture provides us with God's Words, illustrations, and stories. Sometimes these texts make clear-cut inferences to modern day dilemmas, but in some cases, it requires us to add in the tradition of the Church, the experiences of our lives and cultures and to even use logic and reason to complete the process of using the Bible as our guide for determining our beliefs and practices. It is my belief, and the Wesleyan belief, stated in the Methodist Articles of Religion, that Scripture contains *"all things necessary for salvation."* (The 2004 UM Book of Discipline, pg. #59.) The Wesleyan Quadrilateral goes on to inform us on how to read these Sacred Texts in the light of modernity.

- iii. Yes, there are four main categories that should inform our beliefs and practices, and as there are four, all should play a role in that decision. But only one of the four categories is given the respect of a big "S- Scripture." As such, four sides support the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, but it is not an equilateral quadrilateral. (NOT A SQUARE)



12) Finally, what is _____ favorite idiosyncrasy of the Wesleyan Way. I believe it is found in Wesley's understanding of the "_____."

"_____ " was Wesley's term for salvation:

In other words what are the marks of the Christian life? In the Wesleyan tradition, the greatest mark is the "*Witness of the Spirit*." This is the knowledge, the certification, that we are children of God. Romans 8:16 say, "*The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*" The most important mark is the one inside our hearts and minds that tells us we are a child of God, an heir to the Kingdom of God. With this knowledge comes the by-product that the Spirit of God brings in those that believe. This starts with an inward knowledge of God's love and grace. It is witnessed to through the development of the fruits of the Spirit and through our openness to God's gifts, graces, and talents in our life. The Christian, in living a life consistent with the "*life of Christ*", seeks to please God and by living out the teachings of the Bible. Living a life that focuses on a love for God equaled by a love for our neighbors. The Christian will seek to do those things that glorify God, and bring honor to the Kingdom, including being a good employee or employer, a good spouse, a good parent, a good neighbor, and a good citizen. The mark of the Christian life is ultimately the inner peace that comes from knowing that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of one's life.

Section III.

SMALL GROUP- THE WESLEYAN CLASS MEETING/CELL GROUP

a. Small Group Breakout Questions:

- i. Can you name one thing that makes our church distinctly Wesleyan in nature compared to other Protestant or Roman Catholic Churches?
- ii. As to the three simple rules of Wesley: (1) Do no harm/Evil, (2) Do Good, (3) Stay in Love with God, which are you the best at and which do you need the greatest work on?
- iii. In Wesley's Order of Salvation, the four stages of grace (*Prevenient, Justifying, Sanctifying & Glorifying*), where do you clearly land? And what would be one thing you could work on to head towards the next stage?

b. SPECIAL SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT:

Would your group have prayer together thanking the Holy Spirit where each person is doing well and asking for leadership and guidance on growing in living Wesley's Three Simple Rules and walking out Wesley's Means of Grace! **(FOLLOWING THIS YOU ARE DISMISSED)**

NEXT WEEK

The Big House: *"The Church- It's Nature, Mission and Power."*

12. PART II **ADVANCE**- THE WRAP: Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman & Finishing Touches: “Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!”

(REVIEW)

a. THE PLUMB LINE MASTER REVIEW SESSION:

1. Introduction: “The Plumb Line”

Amos 7:7-9 nlt A Vision of a Plumb Line

⁷ Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a **plumb line**. He was checking it with **a plumb line to see if it was straight**. ⁸ And the LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

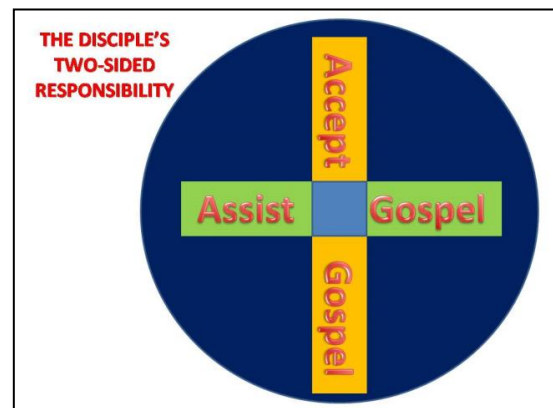
I answered, “**A plumb line.**”

And the Lord replied, “**I will test my people with this plumb line.** I will no longer ignore all their sins. ⁹ The pagan shrines of your ancestors and the temples of Israel will be destroyed, and I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam (*King of Israel*) to a sudden end.” [(!)-my emphasis added]

The Plumb Line is God’s Standard for our Righteousness or Holiness- which means our walk according to the Lord’s Holy Way for His People! It provides us what every Biblically Functioning Faithful Follower of Jesus Christ needs to know to be an effective Disciple.

What is a DISICPLE? It is a noun which means: **one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another, in this case, the doctrines of Jesus Christ. A disciple is someone who is “A convinced adherent of a school or individual.”**

It is important to note the two-sided responsibility of a disciple. They **“ACCEPT”** the doctrine **AND** they **“ASSIST IN SPREADING”** the doctrine. As a modern church we are failing horribly at the latter half of this two-sided responsibility, and we are very marginal in meeting the “Plumb” of the former. Remember in a VERTICLE STRUCTURE there are two axis’s the E-W and N-S. We as disciples must have both Axis’s aligned to be “Plumb.”



2. The Master Builder: “Who is God? Who are we?”

a. The New Testament Declares God is the Master Builder!

John 1:1-3 & 14 nlt

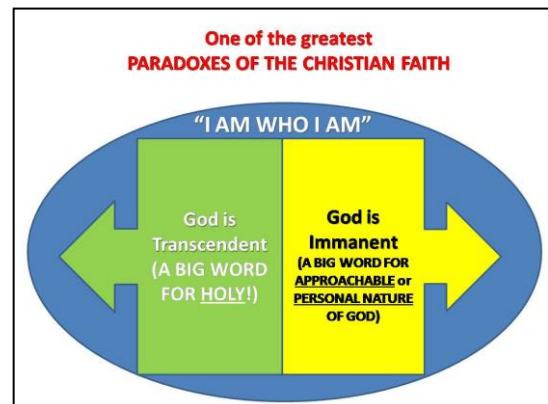
In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and He was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make... ¹⁴So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

b. The Bible indicates 3 Characteristics that are central to the “WHO” of God:

1. God is **LOVE**. **God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. (1 John 4:16b)**
2. God is **HOLY**. (Note: The three-fold “Holy, Holy, Holy” indicating the Trinitarian aspects of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.) **In a great chorus they sang: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD Almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory. (Isaiah 6:3)**
3. God is **JUST**. **The Lord is known for His Justice. (Psalm 9:16a) & I will take the measuring line of justice and the plumb line of righteousness to check the foundation wall you have built. (Isaiah 28:17)**

c. One of the greatest **PARADOXES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH** is found in the **TRANSCENDENT** side and **IMMANENT** side of God.

- i. God is Transcendent. (A BIG WORD FOR **HOLY!**)
- ii. God is Immanent. (A BIG WORD FOR **APPROACHABLE** or **PERSONAL NATURE** OF GOD)



3. The Master's Plan: "God's Basic Plan of Salvation"

The Five-Second Gospel & 10 Second Prayer of Salvation: Created by author & teacher, Judson Poling and written about in Contagious Christianity. (See Leader's Guide, Session 5 pg. 213)

The Five-Second Gospel:

"God loves us, we **BLEW** it,
Christ paid for it, we must **RECEIVE HIM.**"

The 10 Second Prayer of Salvation!

"Dear Lord thank you that you love ME, I BLEW it. I am sorry! I thank you that your son Jesus Christ has paid for MY SIN, and I RECEIVE HIS GIFT AND HIM AS MY SAVIOR!"

4. The Support Beams: "Basic Doctrine"

a. The Support Beams of the Church is found in **The Apostles' Creed**- The Creed of Foundational Christian Doctrine!

b. The Support Beams- the Biggies! are the Core Doctrine or what I like to call **"The Biggies: The essential load supporting beams of The House of God."**

- **Trinity**- Father, Son & Holy Spirit
- **Creation**
- **Jesus, the Christ**- Son of God and Son of Man
- **Original Sin & Free Will**
- **The Atonement & Justification By Faith**
- **The Resurrection**
- **The Ascension**
- **Judgment**
- **The Word of God**
- **The Church**
- **Eternal Life**

c. They have four basic ground rules:

- They are **un-touchable**.
- They are **un-changeable**.
- They are **un-moveable**.
- They are **un-negotiable**.

5. Building Spiritual Stamina: “The Spiritual Disciplines”

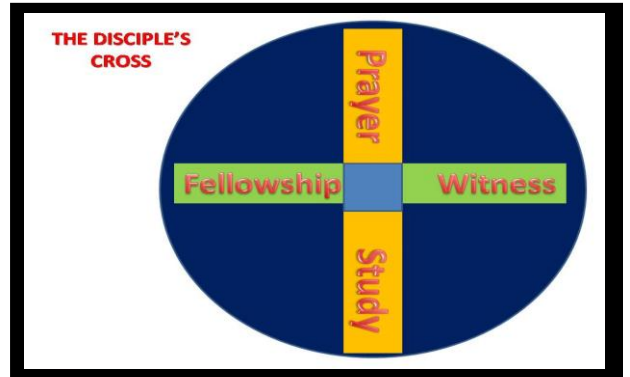
a. The Keys to Walking out God’s Plan of Salvation are found in Building Spiritual Stamina through the Spiritual Disciplines. (Richard Foster)

- i. The **Inward Disciplines:** Study, Prayer, Meditation, Fasting
- ii. The **Outward Disciplines:** Simplicity, Solitude, Submission & Service.
- iii. The **Corporate Disciplines:** Confession, Worship, Guidance/Coaching

b. A SIMPLE WAY TO WALK OUT YOUR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:

The Cross is the way to follow-

- E. **Prayer**
- F. **Study**
- G. **Fellowship**
- H. **Witness**



6. Styling It: “From the Upper Room to a place called Azusa Street”

We share in the **Apostolic witness** to Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord. It took so many faithful servants of God to get the witness of the Apostles from Step 1 to us today in Step 7. Those 7 Steps are:

- i. **The Apostolic Age** (33-312)
- ii. **The State Church** (313-603)
- iii. **The Papal Church** which includes the Dark Ages (604-1517)
- iv. **The Protestant Reformation** (1517-1700)
- v. **Holiness Age** (1700-1904)
- vi. **Azusa Street Revival & Pentecostal Age** (1904-1915)
- vii. **The Charismatic Renewal** (1969-Present)

We are a by-product of **The Protestant Reformation** of the 16th with an undoubtedly **Arminian** and **Wesleyan Holiness Twist**, add to that a fresh dose of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Ghost from **Azusa Street** and a supped-up laity turbocharged radically for Jesus through the modern-day **Charismatic Renewal**.

7. The Big House: “The Church- It’s Nature, Mission and Power.”

a. Troy’s Definition: **WHAT IS THE CHURCH?** It is a TEAM, **A Community of Faith**, who is **growing faithful followers of Christ**. These followers are commissioned by Christ to be His witnesses, His body, His team on earth in order to fulfill the Great Commission. When two or more gather in the name of Christ- the church is in session!

b. The Model for The Church is found in the ACTS PROTOTYPE: **Acts 1-9**

1. A **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** WITH JESUS.
2. THEY HAD A **PASSION** FOR HIS NAME.
3. THEY CARRIED THE **HOLY SPIRIT** WITH THEM.
4. THEY PRESSED ON OUT OF A GREATER FEAR OF **FAILING THEIR LORD** THAN OF THE SECULAR WORLD.
5. THEIR WILL AND DESIRE TO **NEVER GIVE UP** IS WHAT MADE THEM CHAMPIONS FOR THE LORD.
6. AND IT WAS THEIR **COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL** THAT ADDED THOUSANDS TO THEIR CHURCH DAILY AND SPUN OFF HOUSE CHURCHES ACROSS THE WORLD AND TO THIS VERY DAY!

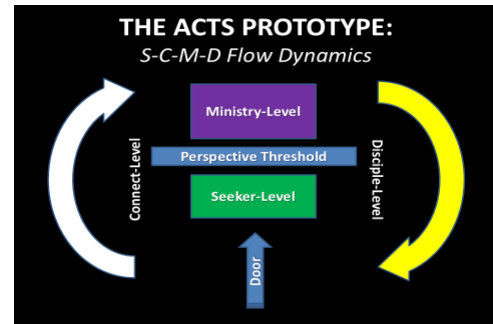
8. Assessment Tools: “Determining Spiritual Phase with the Phrase.”

So, four things define a disciple:

1. **First**, a disciple is one who has made **Jesus the Lord of his or her life**. Jesus said, “Come and follow me.” He is the leader. We must be committed to being the followers.
2. **Second**, a disciple is one who has entered a process of **relational discipleship** with other maturing Christians.
3. **Third**, a disciple is one who is **becoming Christ-like**.
4. **Finally**, a disciple is one who is committed to the **mission of Christ**.

Four phases or stages of the Discipleship Process: (You cannot get to one phase without the previous.)

- a. **Seeker** Phase-
- b. **Connect** Phase-
- c. **Minister** Phase-
- d. **Disciple** Phase-



9. Building Dynamics: “Shepherding & Flock Dynamics”

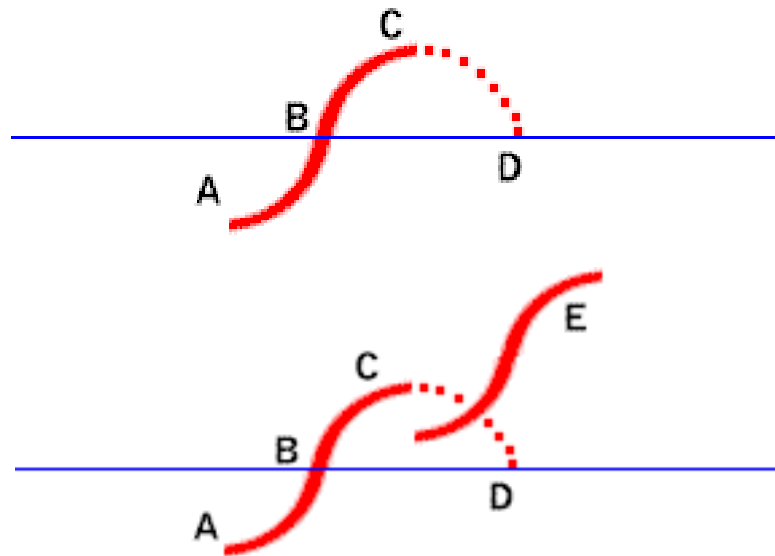
a. Shepherding & Flock Dynamics:

- a. **Preaching** takes place in the larger community at the **Ranch** Level for us this is the Local Church. *(There is a catalyst that occurs in the corporate worship experience. It is in this experience that the Holy Spirit anoints and inhabits the preaching moment for its maximum impact.)*
- b. **Teaching** takes place at the **Herd** level and for us this is within the Local Church. *(There is another experience of corporate learning that takes place in the dynamic experience of a teaching moment to groups of hungry disciples.)*
- c. **Shepherding/Pastoring** is the discipleship that takes place at the **Flock** level within the Local Church. *(The very heartbeat of the church comes in the small group. It is in the flock where people come together, they are called, they are known & know, and support one-another through the Share-Connect-Ministry-Disciple phases of their walk with God.)*

b. THE IMPORTANTCE OF THE SOURCE- GOD AND HIS PLAN FOR THE CHURCH ILLUSTRATED BY: Dead Sea Churches, Cistern Churches, and Living Water Churches:

If we step back from the source? The Church will have no fresh-living water coming in, and in due season we will begin to dry up. Sometime in a survivalist mentality, a church will attempt to hoard and ration the remaining water, not offering it for ministry but holding it in tanks for their own use to survive a little longer. But look what happens, the reserved water becomes stagnant like the water in an old fish tank, and it becomes lethally deadly in due season! Why because the Church of Jesus Christ was designed not to function as a Cistern but as the source of “Living Water” that the World might know JESUS.

- c. **Dynamic Death and Dynamic Growth illustrated by the Bell Curve and the S-Curve Solution:** (*The law of diminishing returns verses the law of momentum.*)



A Healthy Flock has new sheep, adolescent sheep, and mature sheep all under the leadership of under-Shepherds. As a result, new flocks are born. And a Healthy and Productive system means the Ranch is growing. **Ranching on the S-Curve**

If we fail to grow and produce healthy flocks, than they become stagnant and aging leading to decline and death. **Ranching on the Bell-Curve**

10. **Variances & Code:**

“Spiritual Gifts & The Spiritual Health of the Leader”

The key to the Spiritual Health of the Leader is operating in your giftedness. When you operate in your giftedness your **Passions** are tapped, your interests are **engaged & energized**, and your **anointing** is released.

a. **Three indicators help you maintain your OPTIMUM SPIRITUAL HEALTH AS A LEADER: *Taken from Networking by Bill Hybels.**

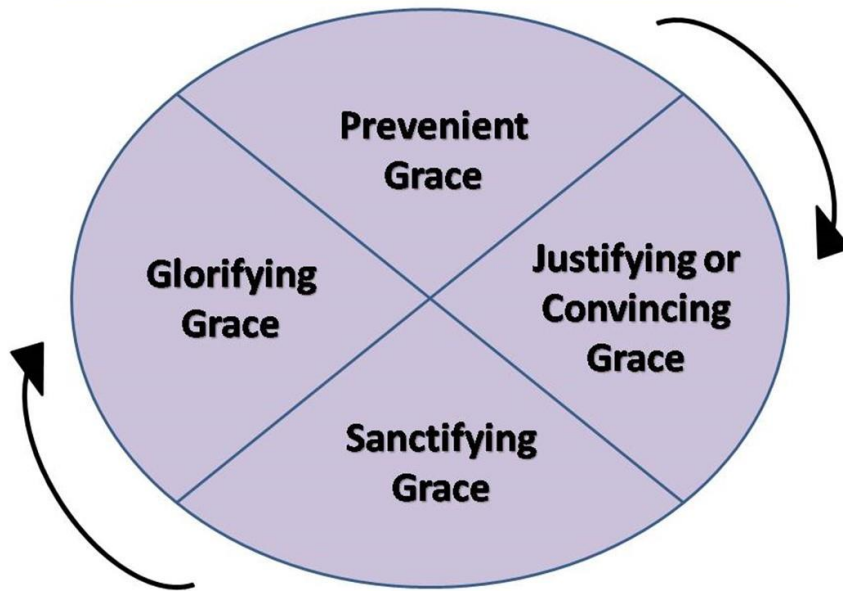
1. **Passion-** Indicates **WHERE** you will be best suited to serve. “I Have a Passion for _____.”
2. **Spiritual Gifts-** Indicate **WHAT** you will do when you serve God. (Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discernment of Spirits, Tongues, Interpretation, Apostleship, Teaching, Heals or Service, Administration, Encouragement/Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Evangelism, Pastor/Shepherding, Hospitality, Craftsmanship, Prayer/Intercession, Worship/Music & others.
3. **Personal Style-** Indicates **HOW** you will serve. *There are two spectrums to look at in determining your personal style in serving the Lord. There is the **ENERGIZED SPECTRUM** & the **ORGANIZED SPECTRUM.***

b. **When these three indicators are put together, they give us a good indicator of how to build our ministry walk to the CODE that God has placed within us. It is within this code that we will be the most fulfilled and satisfied in living our life PLUMB to God’s will for each of us.**

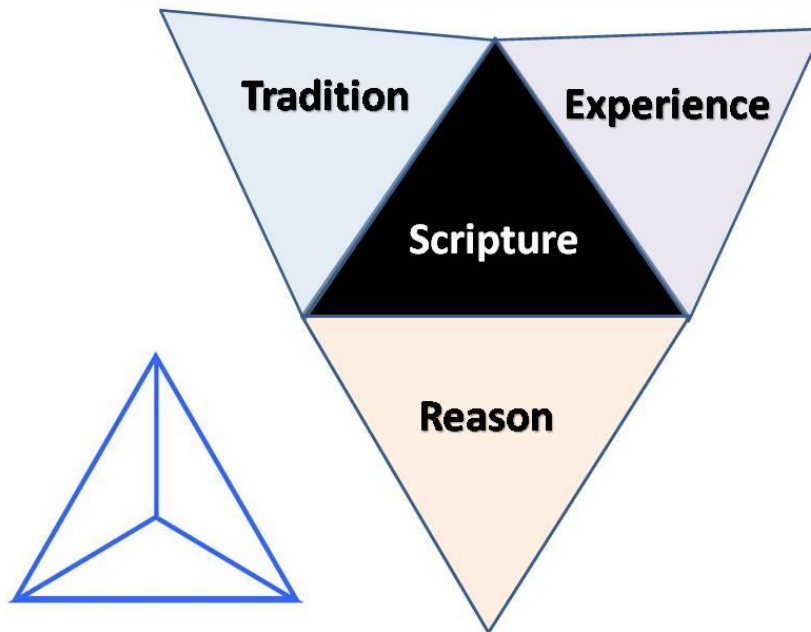
OUR OPTIMUM SPIRITUAL HEALTH		
PASSION	SPIRITUAL GIFTS	PERSONAL STYLE
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____

11. Driveways: *"The Wesleyan Way"*

Wesleyan Four Means of Grace

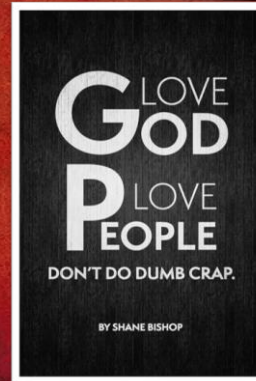


Wesleyan Quadrilateral



Wesley felt evangelical living should be lived out to three simple rules:

1. “By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind.”
2. “By doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible to all.”
3. “By attending upon all the ordinance of God” - In short- Stay in Love with God!



12. PART II **ADVANCE**- THE WRAP: Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman & Finishing Touches: *“Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!”*

Apprentice-Journeyman-Craftsman (A-J-C): *In the Footsteps of the Carpenter.*

- a. **Apprentice-** Student Learner
- b. **Journeyman-** Student practitioner
- c. **Craftsman-** Student Maker

Finishing Touches: *“Growing into a Faithful Follower of Christ!”*

- a. **The Nehemiah Principle :** *Keep recasting the vision every 26 days at minimum.*
- b. **Moving towards the Prize that is Before us:** *Keep Pushing Forward.*

- a. Cover the Text.
- b. Don't let the enemy steal and stall Biblical Growth
- c. Responsibility is the Hallmark of a **GREAT DISCIPLE!**
- d. **Accountability is essential:** Matthew 18:15-17

Matthew 18:15-17 nlt

"Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'* ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

- e. **Conflict Resolution:** *Resolve it ASAP!*
- f. **Let the LIGHT RULE guide you:** *Keep it in the light and out of the dark!*
- g. **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE!**

- a. Live out a
Plumb Line
Orientated
Faith
- b. Grow Faithful
Followers of
Christ



- h. Closing Prayer